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ST THEODORE THE STUDITE'S DEFENCE OF THE ICONS

Theology and Philosophy in Ninth-Century Byzantium

Torstein Theodor Tollefsen

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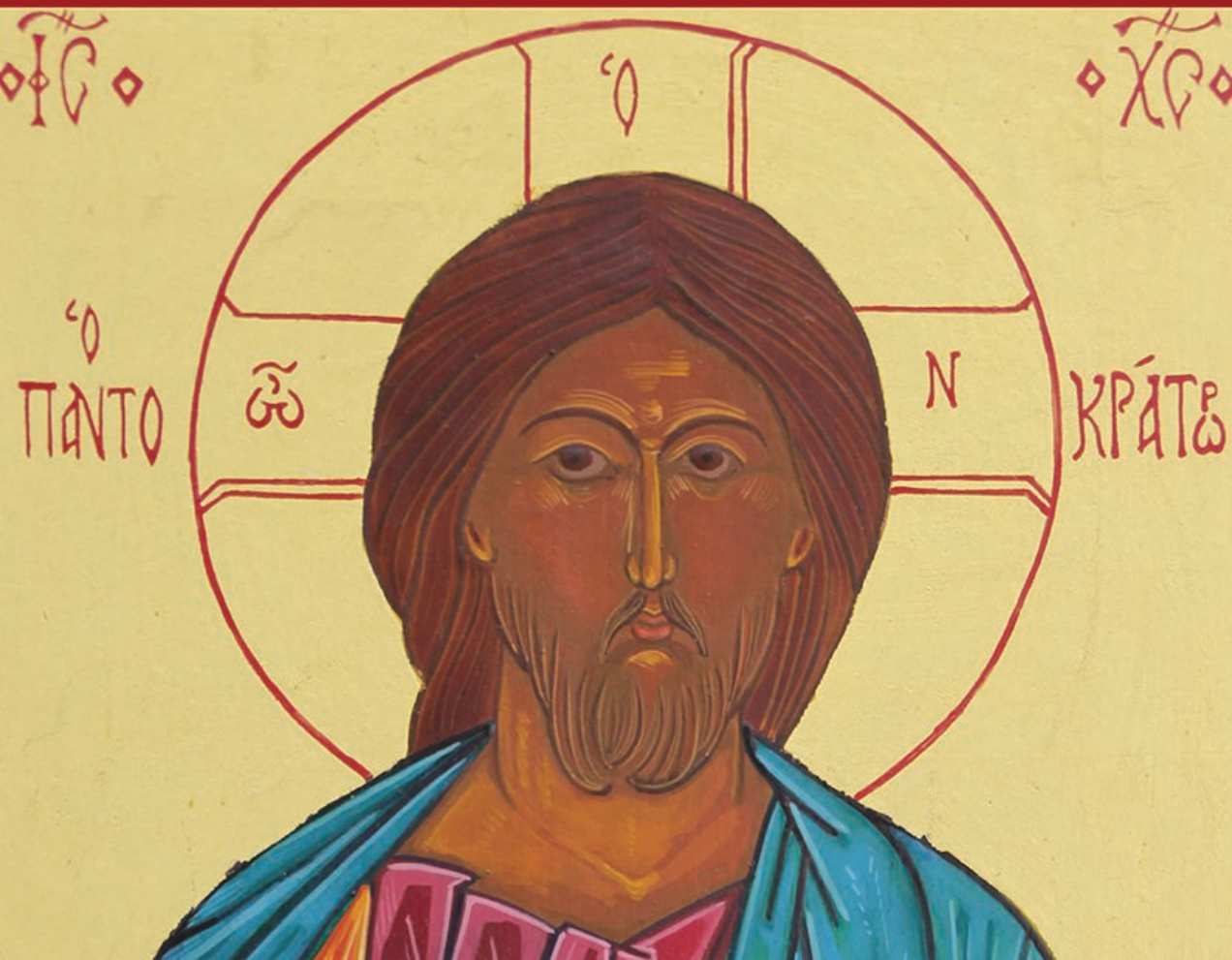

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TORSTEIN THEODOR TOLLEFSEN

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For Juliane and Nikolai

Preface

Some years ago a friend of mine asked: 'Why do you want to work on Theodore the Studite? I don't think you will find him that interesting?' As it turned out, I found him very interesting. Several years after having read Theodore's refutations of the iconoclasts for the first time, I eventually had the idea of investigating his arguments thoroughly. I learned a great deal. First, I was impressed by his willingness to enter seriously into the arguments of his opponents—not something that could be said of all controversionalists in the history of early Christianity. Secondly, I found that his investigation into the doctrine of the iconoclasts culminated in his own quite sophisticated and highly interesting doctrine of images in Christianity. I also found, inspired by my colleague Christophe Erismann, that Theodore is interesting as a witness to the knowledge and application of some traditional forms of logic in ninth-century Byzantium.

Several people have been of some assistance at various stages of my research. I therefore express my thanks to Christophe Erismann (who kindly invited me to give a presentation at the conference he organized on Theodore in Vienna, March 2016), Stig R. Frøyshov, Aase Hessø, Anastasia Maravela, Anders Strand, and Narve Strand. I am grateful to Panagiotis Pavlos who checked the Greek quotations and helped me with the indexes. I should also like to thank the anonymous reader of Oxford University Press, who made important comments on two drafts of this book. I am grateful to St Vladimir's Seminary Press for allowing me to quote from their translation of Theodore's refutations, *St Theodore the Studite, On the Holy Icons*, translated by Catharine P. Roth (1981), and to Walter de Gruyter for allowing me to quote some sections from their critical edition of Theodore's letters: *Theodori Studitae, Epistulae*, Parts 1–2 (1991). I am also grateful to Norman Russell for being so kind in helping me to get my English in better shape. Remaining failures and shortcomings are due to me alone. Finally, I want to thank my friends in the Medieval Seminar at the Department of Philosophy, Classics, History of Art and Ideas at the University of Oslo for giving me the opportunity to present and discuss some of the ideas that are presented in this book.

Torstein Theodor Tollefsen

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List of Abbreviations

Bauer	*A Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, a translation of Walter Bauer's *Griechisch–Deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der übrigen urchristlichen Literatur*, by W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich, University of Chicago Press 1957, fourth impression 1973.
CAG	*Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*, Berlin 1882–1909.
CCSG	*Corpus Christianorum, Series Graeca*, Brepols, Turnhout.
GNO	*Gregorii Nysseni Opera*, Leiden, Brill.
LCL	Loeb Classical Library, London: Heinemann/Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1912 ff.
Liddell and Scott	H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, revised by Sir H. S. Jones, ninth edition 1940, reprint 1978, Clarendon Press, Oxford.
PG	*Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca*, ed. J. P. Migne, Paris 1857–66.

Φύσει ἀπερίγραπτος, τῇ θεϊκῇ σου ὑπάρχων, ἐπ' ἐσχάτων Δέσποτα, σαρκωθεὶς ἠξίωσας περιγράφεσθαι· τῆς σαρκὸς προσλήψει γάρ, καὶ τὰ ἰδιώματα, ἀνελάβου ταύτης ἅπαντα· διὸ τὸ εἶδός σου, τὸ τῆς ἐμφερείας ἐγγράφοντες, σχετικῶς ἀσπαζόμεθα, πρὸς τὴν σὴν ἀγάπην ὑψούμενοι· καὶ τῶν ἰαμάτων, τὴν χάριν ἀπαντλοῦμεν ἐξ αὐτοῦ, τῶν Ἀποστόλων ἑπόμενοι, θείαις παραδόσεσιν.

You who exist naturally uncircumscribed in your divine nature, O Master, having received flesh in the last days, were pleased to become circumscribed; for in assuming flesh you took upon yourself all its properties as well; therefore we, inscribing your appearance (*τὸ εἶδος*),[1] the appearance of your likeness, venerate relationally, being exalted towards your love; and receive from your appearance the grace of healing, following the divine traditions of the Apostles.

(The third of the Stichera Prosomoia from the Great Vespers on Saturday evening before the Sunday of Orthodoxy)

[1] In Chapter 3 I argue that in the context of Theodore's thinking it makes good sense to translate *τὸ εἶδος* as 'appearance'.

Introduction

THE TOPIC

The present book is an investigation of St Theodore the Studite's doctrine of images. It is based mainly on his three refutations of the iconoclasts, *Antirrhetici tres adversus iconomachos*. These refutations have a complex character. On the one hand, they are quite polemical in their treatment of those who oppose the use of religious images, but on the other, we find that Theodore sketches out a positive doctrine of images as well. We shall go into both his polemics and his actual teachings on the subject.

In the title I use the term philosophy. This is because Theodore's defence of the icons is philosophical. First, his methodology and his application of logic draw on a philosophical tradition. Second, both his analytic and his synthetic thinking—when elucidating the doctrines of his opponents and when developing his own views—are ways of *philosophizing* within the limits of certain religious beliefs and practices. I see no need to oppose philosophy and theology in this early Byzantine context. This book is intended as a contribution to the developing field of Byzantine philosophy. It still seems that historians of philosophy neglect the theological thinkers.[1] Whether this is due to prejudice or lack of acquaintance with the material I cannot say. I find that Richard Sorabji has set an example to be followed for how we should approach the intellectual life of Byzantium when he includes material from the 'theologians' in his discussions of the late antique world view.[2] I put 'theologians' in quotation marks since some late

[1] This, however, is not true for Armstrong (1980) and Gerson (2010). Both include treatments of important theological thinkers.

[2] There are examples of this both in Sorabji (1983) and in (1988).

antique and early Byzantine theologians could reasonably be held to be philosophers as well. If St Augustine is a philosopher, then St Maximus the Confessor is a philosopher, as is also St Theodore, at least to some degree.

From Theodore's polemics there emerges a philosophy or a theology of images, i.e. a doctrine that demonstrates the theological relevance of images in Christianity. The icons are memorials of events of salvation history. On a deeper level the contemplation of images together with the hearing of the word of God facilitate access to the realities of faith, and both contemplation and hearing open to theological understanding and personal experience. Icons, it is claimed, witness to eternal truth and give access to this truth. As we shall see, this was a controversial issue in Theodore's times. In fact, it seems to the present author that Theodore's philosophy of images is worked out as a justification of the possibility for the believer of encountering the prototype of the image based on a certain kind of *relationship* between image and prototype, a relationship that will be investigated below. This perhaps sounds rather trivial, but is not. Several aspects of the image–prototype complex, highlighted by Theodore in illustrations and technical vocabulary, for instance impression and seal, effect and cause, belong to the Aristotelian category of 'the relative' (*πρός τι*). My point is that it is precisely by their nature as belonging to 'the relative' that Theodore is able to justify the believer's access to his or her object of veneration. Identifying images as 'relative' is basic to the possibility of contemplating them in their theological function as sources of insight and personal devotion. For this reason it is argued here that the concept of 'the relative' is basic to Theodore's doctrine of the icon. So far as I know, no other interpreter of his doctrine has worked this out in detail. When scholars comment on his use of relation they do so mainly in passing.

Theodore, who in the last part of his life was *hegoumenos* of the Stoudios monastery, was born in Constantinople (759) and died on the Princes' Islands (826). He was active during the second part of the so-called iconoclast controversy and wrote his three refutations after the iconoclast council of 815. He was almost contemporary with another important defender of the icons under the so-called 'second iconoclasm', St Nicephorus (*c.*750 or 758–828), who became patriarch of Constantinople (806–15). Since the present book is on the doctrines of a thinker within such a context, it is in some way a contribution to the history of the iconoclast controversy. I say 'in some way' since what is treated here is not the history of the age of iconoclasm as such,

but rather the *arguments* and *doctrines* of a thinker who participated in the controversy.

In fact, if we keep to the texts that are relevant to the topic of the present book, it is quite clear what was the central issue of the controversy: the icon of Christ and, secondarily, icons in general. The issue can be narrowed down even further: the controversy, as we find it in the relevant texts, was about the possibility of making a *true image* of Christ. If one studies the Definition of the iconoclast council of 754, the relevant passages from Nicaea II of 787, the arguments of Theodore's iconoclast spokesman in his refutations, and his own counter-arguments, this becomes quite clear. As soon as this is acknowledged, Theodore's texts make rather good sense since all the different arguments are related to one basic idea, the idea of the true image. This idea, which we shall investigate in detail, is the idea that an image relates us truly to the prototype, something denied by the iconoclasts.

As will be seen from the next section of this introduction, on earlier literature, I am somewhat critical of some modern perceptions of the topic of Christian art that have been quite influential.[3] In that regard it strikes me that in the treatment of the particular topic of Christian art and iconoclasm the hermeneutical presuppositions and approach matter quite a lot. Several historians seem to work from the hypothesis that Christianity as a religion originally opposed figurative art but eventually came to endorse it. For many art historians the endorsement seems to be due to certain influences from outside the church; this particular development is a special case of *Hellenization*. However that may be, the subject of the present book is Theodore the Studite and his teaching, but even so, there is a general hypothesis in the background of my approach: Christianity has particular features that make the development of art occur as a natural process.[4] Christianity from the beginning was such that there was a potential for this kind of so-called material culture. For this reason this book has an appendix: 'Why Should There Be Such a Thing as Christian Art at all?' The scope

[3] For instance cf. Pelikan (1990), 2; Belting (1996), xxii: 'The story of the iconic portrait opens in late antiquity when Christianity adopted the cult of images of the "pagans", in complete reversal of its original attitude, and developed an image practice of its own.'

[4] The appendix of this book is written from this perspective. Despite Pelikan's stated opinion (see the previous note), it seems to me that the argument of his *Imago Dei* (1990) is more along the lines of the perspective I suggest.

of this appendix is broader than the general scope of the book. It belongs therefore at the end; but in this appendix Theodore will be put into the framework of the development of Christian art as understood by the present author.

The Introduction to this book, in addition to the description of the topic in the present section, has a section on earlier literature and a further section on the conciliar background of Theodore's treatises. This is to show that the iconoclast crisis brought up issues concerning holy images that needed philosophical clarification. Chapter 1 discusses Theodore's education, the methodological approach he uses in the refutations, and his application of logic. As far as I know, no interpreter has treated the whole of his logic systematically before. The chapters that follow are devoted to the analysis of Theodore's critique of iconoclast positions and the development of his own doctrine. The three refutations are not dealt with one by one; rather, central clusters of argumentation from the different treatises are brought together, concepts are identified, and the material is treated systematically under the following headings: Chapter 2: Circumscription, Chapter 3: Relation, and Chapter 4: True Image or Idol of Deceit.

The chapter on circumscription goes into what, as we shall see, is a basic topic in iconoclast argumentation and in all of Theodore's counter-arguments, viz. Christology. One might perhaps, with Cattoi, consider Theodore's book a Christological treatise.[5] Arguments from Christology are put forward in the Definition of the iconoclast council of 754 and play a major role in Theodore's defence. He argues that Christ may be painted because of the Incarnation, and he sets out to demolish iconoclast arguments to the effect that Christ cannot be painted. It will be argued that Theodore offers an original theory of the painting of religious images when he focuses on the εἶδος (form or appearance) of the subject of painting. In some way his doctrine suggests a kind of phenomenological approach to painting, if such a modern characteristic may be applied. Chapter 3 discusses another central topic in Theodore's defence, viz. the relation between the icon and its prototype. This brings with it a discussion of exactly how an image relates to a prototype and a discussion of arguments from synonymy and homonymy.

[5] Cattoi in the introduction to Theodore the Studite, *Writings on Iconoclasm* (2015), 27.

Chapter 4 focuses on the concepts of icon and idol. The iconoclast council of 754 had branded the icons as idols, and even if the council of so-called 'second iconoclasm', in 815, had toned down the accusation of idolatry, Theodore makes the question of icon, idol, and idolatry a central issue. In this context the Old Testament prohibitions are discussed together with Theodore's doctrine of the icon as true image *contra* the iconoclast understanding as formulated in the council of 754 of what might count as a true image. The question of the veneration of icons will also be discussed in this chapter.

In the Appendix, 'Why Should There Be Such a Thing as Christian Art at all?', I argue for what I believe is the rationale behind the Christian image. Theodore is included towards the end as an early ninth-century representative of a long tradition.

I shall end this section on the topic of the present book with a couple of terminological considerations and a comment on the primary sources. Certain terminological conventions seem to have become established in histories of art and theology. There is, for instance, talk of the 'cult of icons' and 'icon worship'. The term 'worship' is ambiguous. It may be used for the *adoration* of a divinity, but may also be used in addressing high-ranking persons.[6] Perhaps the risk of confusion is not so serious in a British context, but at least outside such a context the term might easily be conceived as indicating adoration. It is problematic that many historians of Christian art seem to intimate that 'worship' in fact has to do with adoration of certain material objects. Such connotations are most unfortunate in scholarly literature that again and again uses the term in connection with relics, icons, and the saints. This is all the more regrettable in view of the fact that those who defended the icons in the iconoclast era paid attention to terminology and objected to the accusation that icons *qua* material objects are adored. The term 'cult' might also be problematic for similar reasons, but when used in the sense of 'a system of religious veneration or devotion directed towards a particular person or object' it may be convenient to employ it.[7] The Greek word *εἰκών* simply means 'image' and in translating it below I shift between 'image' and 'icon'.

[6] Cf. Bevan (2014), 139–40.

[7] Tsironis (2005), 91 n. 2, remarks that the term 'cult', strictly speaking, is equivalent to *λατρεία* in Greek, and can therefore only refer to God. If that is the case, it should be avoided. However, if the term is applied in a much looser sense it could be acceptable.

There is no critical text for Theodore's treatises and the scholar has therefore to work from the text printed in J. P. Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, *Series Graeca*, vol. 99. There are to my knowledge two modern translations into a Western language: St Theodore the Studite, *On the Holy Icons*, translated by Catharine P. Roth and published by St. Vladimir's Seminary Press in 1981, and Theodore the Studite, *Writings on Iconoclasm*, translated and introduced by Thomas Cattoi in the series Ancient Christian Writers (New York, 2015). For Theodore's letters I refer to Theodori Studitae, *Epistulae*, ed. Georgios Fatouros, parts 1–2, (Berlin, 1991).

Finally, the reader should be aware of the fact that the background of the present author is in philosophy and not in art history. My main field of interest is late antique thought, the conflict and interaction of pagan and Christian philosophy, and the development of basic Christian doctrines of theology and cosmology. I do not claim, therefore, to employ the conceptual tools of art history with any sophistication; rather, my explicit desire is to approach the whole issue from a philosophical point of view that is historical as well as systematic.

EARLIER LITERATURE ON THE ICONOCLAST CONTROVERSY AND ON THEODORE

A lot has been written on the icon. The relevant literature on Theodore himself, however, is not extensive.[8] We may divide the literature on the icon into two main groups, viz. works of a historical nature and works on modern icon theology. Since my preoccupation is with doctrines that originated in early Christian history, works on modern icon theology are left out. However, even if we just concentrate on the second group, a lot has been written on early Christian and Byzantine art from the point of view of art history and the history of theology and doctrine. Much of what has been written on Christian art and the iconoclast controversy is quite problematic and there is a need for alternative approaches. Several contributions cover the same ground and if one has read one or two standard descriptions the third seldom brings much that is new. However, a recent publication offers in sum a

[8] There is an extensive literature on different aspects of Theodore's importance as a monastic figure, but there is not much on his theology.

rather new picture of the controversy, viz. L. Brubaker and J. Haldon's *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era c. 680–850: A History* (2011). The authors offer a reinterpretation of the historical material that will come as a surprise for those who are only acquainted with earlier standard expositions. I should say immediately that some of the claims made in this book are likely to provoke discussion, but whether one accepts Brubaker and Haldon's interpretations of the material or not, the book will be a point of reference for new approaches to the historical issues. However, since my focus is mainly on ideas, doctrines, and arguments there are other contributions that are more relevant than this monograph.

Jaroslav Pelikan's *Imago Dei: The Byzantine Apologia for Icons* (1990), Kenneth Parry's *Depicting the Word: Byzantine Iconophile Thought of the Eighth and Ninth Centuries* (1996), and Charles Barber's *Figure and Likeness: On the Limits of Representation in Byzantine Iconoclasm* (2002) have all been important for the general development of the reflections set out in the chapters that follow.

In chapter 4 of Pelikan's monograph, 'The Senses Sanctified', the author investigates a subject of particular importance for the appendix of the present book, viz. what he calls 'the new Christian epistemology'. So far as I can see, not many scholars, if any at all, have seen the importance of the Incarnation for the development of Christian art so clearly as Pelikan.

Parry's stimulating book focuses on doctrines and arguments rather than on purely historical developments. He offers a study of Byzantine iconophile thought with special reference to John of Damascus, Theodore the Studite, and the patriarch Nicephorus. Parry divides his monograph into two parts, dealing respectively with philosophical and theological themes. The purpose of the philosophical part is to show the extent to which philosophy influenced iconophile theory.

Barber claims that the debates of the iconoclast controversy 'were narrowly focused upon the question of the truthfulness of visual representation. These theologians were seeking to define the icon, a manufactured depiction of a holy person or event, as a legitimate or illegitimate medium for Christian knowledge.'[9] The icon is seen as a piece of theological 'text', and as a relevant point of reference for Christian epistemology. Barber criticizes the attempts made by many

[9] Barber (2002), 8.

to dismiss the image itself from the description of the crisis.[10] The descriptions of the controversy 'look behind' the icon, so to say, to what is considered to be the 'deeper political, social, and theological strains within the culture'. Barber wants to bring the image itself into focus:[11] 'In so doing, I will argue that the iconoclastic dispute concerned the definition of the icon itself as an appropriate medium for theology.' I agree with this approach.

When it comes to St Theodore himself, he is mentioned in almost every work written on the iconoclast controversy without any fundamental analysis of his thought. In this regard Parry's book is an exception. However, there are at least two relevant doctoral theses on Theodore. In 1993 Theodor Damian defended his thesis for the degree of Ph.D. at Fordham University: *The Icons: Theological and Spiritual Dimensions According to St. Theodore of Studion*. The second thesis was defended by Gary Wayne Alfred Thorne for the degree of Ph.D. at Durham University in 2003: *The Ascending Prayer to Christ: Theodore Stoudite's Defence of the Christ-εἰκών against Ninth Century Iconoclasm*.

Alice Gardner treats Theodore's biography in her book of 1905, *Theodore of Studium, His Life and Times*. In 2015 Roman Cholij published his *Theodore the Stoudite, The Ordering of Holiness*, which contains a substantial biography. However, his treatment of certain aspects of Theodore's education leaves something to be desired. Cholij's book is focused on Theodore's theology of the Christian life and contains very little of relevance for his iconophile arguments.

Several influential historical approaches to early Christian and Byzantine art and the iconoclast controversy seem to share some common presuppositions. Among these presuppositions is the idea that early Christianity was quite a pure and simple religion without nurturing any interest in material culture. Further, practices that involve sensible elements like dust, oil, incense, candles, relics, icons, etc. of, it is believed, a more or less popular provenance expose Christianity to pagan influences culminating in magic, animism, and superstitious beliefs in the presence of divine power in such material items. Paul J. Alexander, for instance, says: 'at the root of image worship lay the concept that material objects can be the seat of divine power and that this power can be secured through physical contact with the sacred'.[12] This seems to suggest that to possess an icon means to possess an object invested with power so that one may control certain aspects of life or

[10] Barber (2002), 7. [11] Barber (2002), 11. [12] Alexander (1958), 5.

the world through this power. The notion of 'power' has stimulated the imagination of earlier scholars to such a degree that they again and again return to it as a *magic* element in a more or less paganized Christian reception of art.

At least three scholars have, convincingly it could be argued, identified the sources of the notion of an original Christian opposition to art in certain developments in nineteenth-century Protestant theology, viz. Sister Charles Murray, Paul Corby Finney, and Steven Bigham.

In 1977 Sister Charles Murray published a paper, 'Art and the Early Church', in the *Journal of Theological Studies*.[13] She argues against what she sees as a universally held 'fact' that the early church was hostile to art.[14] According to Murray, the content of the established view is that Christianity from its origins in Judaism 'inherited its pure and spiritual worship of God "in spirit and truth" and along with this therefore a hostility to religious artistic representation which both religions identified with pagan practice'.[15] Christian authorities, it is claimed, held the second commandment as binding as did the Jews. She then tries to identify the sources for this modern prejudice in scholars like H. Koch.[16] She also says that it was Ernst Kitzinger's use of nineteenth-century material in his 'The Cult of Icons in the Age before Iconoclasm' (1954) that made this approach canonical.[17]

Paul Corby Finney published his interesting book *The Invisible God: The Earliest Christians on Art* in 1994.[18] Finney investigates pre-Constantinian archaeological material in accordance with an accurate and strict methodology. He also offers an illuminating analysis of apologetic material that usually has been appealed to by those who argue for an original Christian hostility towards images.[19] How, then, does Finney identify the modern ancestry of the common view of the original Christian hostility towards images? In his chapter on the history of interpretation, he points to H. Koch as especially influential.[20] Koch, Finney says, 'was a man bound by a time and a place, and both belonged to Adolf von Harnack':[21] 'Harnack viewed the

[13] Murray (1977), 303–45.
[14] Murray (1977), 303.
[15] Murray (1977), 303–4.
[16] Murray (1977), 305; Koch (1917).
[17] Murray (1977), 306. When I use the term nineteenth-century material I mean that scholars like Koch and Kitzinger were influenced by such figures such as Adolf von Harnack (1851–1930) who could be said to represent a nineteenth-century theological outlook.
[18] Finney (1994).
[19] Finney (1994), chs 2 and 3.
[20] Finney (1994), 7–10.
[21] Finney (1994), 8.

earliest form of Christianity as in essence (*wesentlich*) a religion of simple Semites living lives of high moral purpose. Their paradigm: the life and death of Jesus.' Koch's book, *Bilderfrage*, according to Finney, 'is a modern doxology, a catena of authoritative patristic testimonies carefully selected and arranged to illustrate Harnack's Hellenization theory'.[22] According to Finney, the influence goes from Koch to scholars like Ernst Kitzinger.

The third contribution to be mentioned is Steven Bigham's book *Early Christian Attitudes towards Images* (2004).[23] Bigham draws on both Murray and Finney and tries to develop the argument further. He presents the ancestry of the hostility thesis as drawn up by his predecessors and tries to strengthen the argument against the claim that early Christianity was aniconic and iconophobic by discussing the sources that are normally adduced for the ancient Jewish and Christian hostility towards images.

Influential exponents of the hostility thesis include Kitzinger, Alexander, and Barnard. In 1954 Ernst Kitzinger published an article with the title 'The Cult of Images before the Age of Iconoclasm'.[24] This article stimulated further work on the subject. Its value lies in the amount of documentation brought forward, but the analysis and partly the methodology leave a lot to be desired. In accordance with the legacy suggested above, Kitzinger postulates that a spiritualized religion does not desire material images or symbols:[25] 'Christianity's original aversion to the visual arts was rooted in its spirituality.' This spiritualized worship implied 'a general rejection of material props in religious life and worship'. Images were therefore originally resisted, categorically rejected, during the first two centuries of the existence of Christianity.[26]

In 1955 Kitzinger published a second article, 'On Some Icons of the Seventh Century'. He focuses among other things on what he considers an important change in the understanding and use of images in the post-Justinianic era.[27] Images were justified, he says, not because of their usefulness, but because of 'the strength of a transcendental relationship to their prototypes'.[28] Kitzinger speaks of 'a flow of substance or energy emanating from the prototype and received by the image'.[29]

[22] Finney (1994), 9.
[23] Bigham (2004).
[24] Kitzinger (1954).
[25] Kitzinger (1954), 88–9.
[26] Kitzinger (1954), 85.
[27] Kitzinger (1955), 142–4.
[28] Kitzinger (1955), 142.
[29] Kitzinger (1955), 143.

It is interesting that this was written at a time when research into Neoplatonism and the concept of *energeia* in late antique thought was not much developed. Such a 'flow' from the prototype into the image may be highlighted philosophically, but Kitzinger just refers to the rather diffuse concept of 'magic'.[30] Why should Christians in late antiquity simply nurture primitive magical notions? Could it not be that they had a world view that was open to the presence of the higher in the lower through divine *energeia*? Even if their notions were rather vague, vague notions are not necessarily magical.

Paul J. Alexander published his book *The Patriarch Nicephorus of Constantinople* in 1958. This is a well-known monograph that is often referred to. When it comes to the iconoclast controversy, however, it is full of problems. Like Kitzinger's articles the book abounds in problematic terminology like 'icon-worship' and 'image-worship'.

In 1974 L. W. Barnard published *The Graeco-Roman and Oriental Background of the Iconoclast Controversy*. Barnard holds that the controversy originally was over the charge of idolatry, and that John of Damascus introduced the argument from Christology for the defence of icons.[31] The most problematic parts of Barnard's argument are found in his chapter 4, 'The Graeco-Roman Background of the Image Cult'. He speaks freely of image worship, magic, magical power, and animism. He obviously finds the notion that power is invested in or operates through material items superstitious. Such evaluations seem, however, rather anachronistic, since the idea that God is present throughout the cosmos by his *energeiai* became a basic idea among theologians from the third century onwards, as it was in the Platonic schools. In a general verdict on the beliefs of the Byzantines, Barnard states that salvation came from 'the icon, the robe, the girdle, the prayers of the Virgin'.[32] The picture Barnard draws of Christians as semi-pagans after centuries of Christian tradition in liturgical practice, theological discussion, philosophical thinking, and moral teaching is rather strange. It is as if there had been no Christian consciousness at all. There are good reasons to be sceptical of such a picture.

These critical comments on select literature from an influential tradition are made for a purpose: the history of Christian art and the background of the iconoclast controversy should be reinvestigated. It is high time to rid ourselves of nineteenth-century prejudices

[30] See the Appendix. [31] Barnard (1974), 48. [32] Barnard (1974), 60.

about how primitive, spiritual Christianity was corrupted through its development into the early Byzantine church.

CONCILIAR BACKGROUND

Marie-France Auzépy states that the 'written sources for the 150 years of iconoclasm reveal both the paucity of material, and how inadequate it is for understanding the profound transformation of the empire in this period'.[33] She claims that 'the history of eighth-century Byzantium tends to be highly hypothetical'.[34] When it comes to the specifically religious aspect of these 150 years she says that the sources are 'not only sparse, they are also biased', since (with the exception of juridical and administrative documents) they were written by the iconophiles, the enemies of the iconoclasts, the victors of the controversy. The material has been interpreted in various ways and we have obviously not yet seen the end of discussions on how some texts should be conceived.[35] Without entering into the controversial, historical details, since the subject of this book is ideas and doctrines, we can just say that the era of iconoclasm (730–843) has been divided into two periods, the first covering the reign of the Isaurian dynasty (*c.*730–87), the second the reigns of Leo V and his Amorian successors (815–43).[36] The periods are separated by an iconophile interval when the empress Irene called the second council of Nicaea in 787.

Whoever the instigators of iconoclasm were, rumours that an anti-icon campaign was developing, associated with actions taken by the emperor Leo III (717–41), reached Jerusalem and were responded to by St John of Damascus (*c.*665–*c.*749).[37] He wrote three treatises

[33] Auzépy (2008), 251. [34] Auzépy (2008), 252.

[35] One may compare older expositions of the controversy with the critical reinterpretation of the sources offered by Brubaker and Haldon (2011).

[36] Auzépy (2008), 254.

[37] In the introduction to John of Damascus, *On the Divine Images* (2003), 9–10, Louth argues that John died about 750 and discusses the dating of the three treatises. Brubaker and Haldon (2011), 183–5, however, argue that two of the three treatises written by John should be dated anew, since they fit the conditions of the years just before and even maybe just after the iconoclast council of 754. However, one could not say Brubaker and Haldon's arguments are conclusive and the references to John's second treatise (2.12 and 16) are not convincing in that regard. Is it not rather strange that John's second treatise seems to associate imperial iconoclasm exclusively with the name of Leo III (2.16) while Brubaker and Haldon (2011), 151–5, claim that Leo probably

against the iconoclasts, the first some time between 726 and 730, the second after 730, and the third maybe in the early 740s.[38] Leo's son, Constantine V (741–75), called a council that met in Hiereia in Chalcedon in 754 and pronounced against the veneration of icons. The Definition of this council is preserved in the acts of the second council of Nicaea, called by Irene in 787, which defined the veneration of icons as an important element of tradition. The latter council has entered history as the Seventh Ecumenical Council.

However, a second period of iconoclasm followed, in which emperor Leo V (813–20) called a second iconoclast council in Constantinople in 815. The Definition and the patristic florilegium of this council are preserved in the writings of the patriarch Nicephorus. The two main theologians among the iconophiles during the second iconoclasm were St Nicephorus of Constantinople and St Theodore the Studite. According to Thorne, Theodore probably wrote his *Antirrhetici tres adversus iconomachos* as a response to the iconoclast council of 815.[39] Maybe it was written within a year or so of the council. However, as Thorne also argues, it seems that the three treatises in different ways respond to different stages of iconoclast argumentation.

Unfortunately, the theology of the iconoclasts, and their argumentation for their own positions, do not survive as independent documents. All that is left is what is preserved in the writings of the representatives of the victorious side and in conciliar documents. The Definition from the iconoclast council of 754 is quoted section by section in the acts of the Ecumenical Council of 787. The remains of the iconoclast council of 815 are preserved in Nicephorus' *Refutatio et eversio definitionis synodalis anni 815*.[40] According to Alexander, the Definition of this council 'is an exceedingly tame and disappointing document':[41] 'The bishops of 815 concluded by condemning the worship of the spurious images, invalidated the decisions of 787, accepted

was not responsible for any major actions against the icons and that imperial iconoclasm developed under Constantine V? Obviously someone reported to John that Leo was heavily involved.

[38] The dating is Louth's (John of Damascus, *On the Divine Images*, 10).

[39] Thorne (2003), 28.

[40] Critical text published by J. M. Featherstone in CCSG 33 (1997). There is as yet no translation into modern language of this text, but Alexander (1958) offers a summary (242–64).

[41] Alexander (1953), 40–1. In this article Alexander, however, argues that a careful study of the florilegium suggests that the theologians of the council were more creative than is usually thought.

those of 754, and declared the making of images to be devoid of worship and useless—while at the same time, in a spirit of compromise, expressly abstaining from calling them idols.' This difference between the two councils, that the council of 754 branded the icons as idols while the council of 815 ambiguously abstained from calling them that, is reflected in Theodore's treatises.[42] In the second treatise he complains of the inconstancy of iconoclast claims, 'at one time they blasphemously miscall the icon of our Lord Jesus Christ an idol of deceit; at another time they do not say so, but say instead that the depiction is good, because it is useful for education and memory, but is not for veneration'.[43]

A study of the Definition of the iconoclast council of 754 reveals a theological argument of some interest. It is to a large degree this theology that Theodore responds to. We must therefore turn to an analysis of this basic argument. However, before we do that we should direct our attention to another text that contains the first decision on images from a synod that might be claimed to be ecumenical, viz. the so-called council 'in Trullo' or the Quinisext council (691–2).

The council was convoked by Justinian II in order to complete the work of the fifth and sixth ecumenical councils by issuing canonical regulations. Its canon 82 about the representation of Christ as a man instead of a lamb is definitely of relevance for the general issue of icons. The assembly considered itself ecumenical, but the iconoclast Definition of 754 carefully states its adherence to six ecumenical councils and ends its short notes on these with the council of Constantinople of 680–1.[44] Why is the Quinisext council not mentioned? One should have expected it to be criticized because of its canon 82:

> 82. That artists are not to portray the Forerunner pointing to a lamb.
>
> In some depictions of the venerable images, the Forerunner is portrayed pointing with his finger to a lamb, and this has been accepted as a representation of grace, prefiguring for us through the law the true Lamb, Christ our God. Venerating, then, these ancient representations and foreshadowings as symbols and prefigurations of truth handed down by the Church, nevertheless, we prefer grace and truth, which we

[42] I say 'ambiguously' because it seems somehow inconsistent to profess adherence to the council of 754 and at the same time abstain from calling the icons idols.

[43] *Antirrheticus* 2, preface, PG 99: 352c–d (Roth's translation). Cf. *Antirrheticus* 1.2 and 13, PG 99: 329b–c and 344c–d.

[44] Mansi xiii, 233b–237e; Krannich et al. (2002), 34–9; Hennephof (1969), 64–5; translation in Krannich et al. (2002), 35–9; Gero (1977), 72–3; Sahas (1988), 70–4.

> have received as fulfilment of the law. Therefore, in order that what is perfect, even in paintings, may be portrayed before the eyes of all, we decree that henceforth the figure of the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, Christ our God, should be set forth in images in human form, instead of the ancient Lamb; for in this way we apprehend the depth of the humility of the Word of God, and are led to the remembrance (*μνήμην*) of his life in the flesh, his passion and his saving death, and of the redemption which thereby came to the world.[45]

The Quinisext council promulgated a number of regulating canons and some, according to Louth, were of particular interest for the Constantinopolitan church itself: 'One guiding principle of the canons of the quinisext council was to define the practises of the Byzantine church in conscious opposition to the developing customs of the Latin west.'[46] Many of those who signed the canons were among the participants of the Sixth Ecumenical Council. It is not improbable, therefore, that the iconoclast council of 754 was afraid both of being criticized for jeopardizing the Christological settlement of 680–1 and for jeopardizing the interests of the Byzantine church. However, it may be that the Definition of 754 contains a slightly covered up allusion to the Quinisext council:

> Again, the aforementioned architect of evil, unable to behold her [i.e. the church's] comeliness was not at loss for evil stratagems, for bringing, by deceit, at diverse times and in diverse ways, humanity into subjection to himself. Rather, in the guise of Christianity he secretly brought back idolatry, and persuaded, by means of his sophistic arguments (*σοφίσμασι*), those who paid regard to him, that they should not be set free from that which is created, but should rather worship that which is created and venerate it, and deem that which was made as God, [provided that] it was called by the name of 'Christ'.[47]

What is the target here? Who was deceived and how did the devil secretly bring back idolatry 'in the guise of Christianity'? It is not improbable that this is a covert reference to the Quinisext council. The iconoclast council might have wanted to suggest that amongst its otherwise reputable work at a certain point the Quinisext council gave in to a sophistic trap of devilish origin. It seems obvious that an

[45] Quoted from Nedungatt and Featherstone (1995), 162–4, Greek term inserted by me.
[46] Louth (2008), 245.
[47] Mansi xiii, 221c–d, Krannich et al. (2002), 32; Hennephof (1969), 62–3; translation in Krannich et al. (2002), 33; Gero (1977), 70–1; Sahas (1988), 62.

outright condemnation of the council would be in the interest of neither the emperor nor the patriarchate.

The importance of the 82nd canon was, of course, clearly seen by the iconophile council of 787. The canon was read out in the fourth session and, to quote Barber, 'it is evident that there was need to validate the council and to authenticate this specific text'.[48] Theodore, of course, accepted the authority of the canon and quotes it in his second refutation as stemming from the fathers of the Holy Sixth Ecumenical Council.[49] However, the iconoclast opponent Theodore refers to in this connection does not comment on the quotation—which suggests some embarrassment felt by an iconoclast on this particular topic—but only sets it aside with the remark that it should not be accepted since it is 'recent'.

One should expect that this canon would play some role in an emerging controversy over images. It is not particularly surprising that such a canon is promoted. What is surprising is that about forty years later, when the making and the veneration of images were challenged and this challenge gained imperial support, a movement was initiated to remove images. I shall not speculate on how this came about. In the case of the images, people must have been quite familiar with their presence when powerful opposition arose. However, we know that throughout the history of the church, some representatives of local authority opposed images, even if the motives and reasons are not particularly easy to interpret. However that may be, opposition broke out in the 720–30s, gained imperial support, and one might wonder if canon 82 of the Quinisext council did not have something to do with that.

What was the controversy about? According to Barber the actual debates 'were narrowly focused upon the question of the truthfulness of visual representation':[50] 'These theologians were seeking to define the icon, a manufactured depiction of a holy person or event, as a legitimate or illegitimate medium for Christian knowledge.' He considers Byzantine iconoclasm 'as a complex series of evolving debates set in train by a problematic piece of canonical legislation'. This legislation is the 82nd canon of the Quinisext council. It is not improbable that Barber is right. Maybe the 82nd canon, as the first regulation on figurative art issued by a council claimed to be ecumenical, initiated

[48] Barber (2002), 40–1.
[49] *Antirrheticus* 2.38, PG 99: 380b; cf. 2.39: 380d.
[50] Barber (2002), 8.

considerations in the years that followed and became a catalyst for different opinions on the usefulness of images. According to Barber, 'a key point of dispute for the iconophiles and the iconoclasts was the legitimacy of the canons formulated at the Quinisext Council'.[51] One might object to this explanation that it is strange then that the debates are not more focused on the canon itself and on the authority of this council. However, as we have tried to show above, the iconoclasts probably did not want to focus too much attention on the canon, since that might result in highly undesirable consequences. For the sake of the interests of the Byzantine church itself it would be important for representatives of the iconoclast party to throw a smoke screen over this canon. One could not risk jeopardizing the Quinisext council itself.

What, then, are the challenges brought forward by the iconoclasts? We turn to the Definition of the iconoclast council of 754, preserved in the acts of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, in order to identify the main argument. As we shall see in Theodore's refutations, this is central in his attacks on iconoclasm.

The Definition is designed to present the council as the Seventh Ecumenical Council.[52] It supplies an outline of the divine economy of creation and salvation. Man fell due to satanic deception and Christ came to rescue man from the devil's ensnarement that had put him in a wrong and idolatrous relation to the cosmos.[53] Christ rescued us from the corruptive teaching of demons, took us away from the worship of idols, and handed us over to the adoration of God 'in spirit and truth' (John 4:24).[54] All of this is built up as an argument with a reasonable sequence that should be acceptable to all Christian readers, but it is also designed to justify the next move: Christ ascended to heaven and beautified the church with doctrines of piety that were preserved by the fathers and the six ecumenical councils.[55] The present council then puts itself into this sequence since it comes to the

[51] Barber (2002), 41.

[52] Mansi xiii, 208d, 209c–d; Krannich et al. (2002), 30; Hennephof (1969), 61; translation in Krannich et al. (2002), 31; Gero (1977), 68–9; Sahas (1988), 52–3: the Leo mentioned is Leo IV, the son of Constantine V.

[53] Mansi xiii, 212b, 212e–213a, 213c–e; Krannich et al. (2002), 30–2; Hennephof (1969) 61–2; translation in Krannich et al. (2002), 31–3; Gero (1977), 68–70; Sahas (1988), 54, 55, 56.

[54] Mansi xiii, 216c; Krannich et al. (2002), 32; Hennephof (1969), 62; translation in Krannich et al. (2002), 33; Gero (1977) 70; Sahas (1988), 57.

[55] Mansi xiii, 217a–b; Krannich et al. (2002), 32; Hennephof (1969), 62; translation in Krannich et al. (2002), 33; Gero (1977), 70; Sahas (1988), 58.

rescue of the church in the present critical situation, as the argument goes on: the devil could not stand Christ's generosity towards the church and *reintroduced idolatry imperceptibly and convincingly by his subtleties*—which, as argued above, probably is a covert reference to the 82nd canon of an otherwise authoritative council—and Christians began to adore creation and considered created things as God, calling them with the name of Christ.[56]

From an eloquently presented background, the Definition moves on to develop an argument, the essential point of which is the concept of *circumscription*.[57] In the concrete sense circumscription (*περιγραφή*) means that something may be marked off with a line. It is also used in an abstract sense as the definition of something. Creatures suffer different kinds of circumscription, but God cannot be circumscribed. We return to this terminology in Chapter 2. The council appeals to the basics of orthodox Christology as developed in previous councils and states the faith that Christ is one hypostasis in two natures, wills, and activities. One and the same Lord is the subject of both the miracles and the sufferings.[58] Having stated this the council immediately accuses the 'unlawful art of the painters' of blasphemy against the divine economy and of subverting the doctrine of the councils. The iconophiles 'confirm [not only] Nestorius who divided the Son and Logos of God who for our sake became man, into a duality of sons, but nevertheless also Arius and Dioscorus and Eutyches and Severus, who taught the confusion and mixture of the two natures of the one Christ'.[59]

The council throws three accusations against the iconophiles, viz. that they are in effect Nestorians or, alternatively, Arians or monophysites. We shall see below how these charges are constructed. The dilemma, considered to be inescapable, is explained the following way: the artist makes an icon and calls it Christ, and 'The name "Christ" refers to both God and man, therefore the image is of God as well as of man' (*Καὶ ἔστιν τὸ Χριστὸς ὄνομα θεὸς καὶ ἄνθρωπος, λοιπὸν καὶ εἰκὼν*

[56] Mansi xiii, 221c–d; Krannich et al. (2002), 32; Hennephof (1969) 62–3; translation in Krannich et al. (2002), 33; Gero (1977), 70–1; Sahas (1988), 62.

[57] Mansi xiii, 237d, 240c, 241e, 244d, 245d–e, 248e, 252a–b, 256a–b, 256e–257b, 257e–260b; Krannich et al. (2002), 38–42; Hennephof (1969) 65–7; translated in Krannich et al. (2002), 39–43; Gero (1977) 73–6; Sahas (1988), 74–90.

[58] Mansi xiii, 237d; Krannich et al. (2002), 38; Hennephof (1969) 65.

[59] Mansi xiii, 240c, 241e, 244d; Krannich et al. (2002), 38; Hennephof (1969), 65; translation in Krannich et al. (2002), 39; Gero (1977), 73–4; Sahas (1988), 75, 77, and 78.

Θεοῦ καὶ ἀνθρώπου).[60] If the painter assumes such a thing the immediate corollaries are that the painter either (i) circumscribes the uncircumscribability of the Godhead in the created flesh, or he (ii) confuses the natures of the unconfused union. The first consequence violates the Chacedonian adverb 'without change' (*ἀτρέπτως*); the second violates the adverb 'without confusion' (*ἀσυγχύτως*). (a) The first assumption could be said to change the divinity into something circumscribed that could be painted. This is probably the reason for labelling the iconophile painter an Arian, since one could charge him with transforming divinity into a created thing. The result of such a change amounts to some Arian-like entity—at least one might urge this polemically. (b) If the iconophile should deny that he presupposes such a change, and still maintains that the whole Christ may be painted, then he may be charged with mixing the two natures together and in consequence be accused of being a monophysite. In my opinion this is the most artificial and strange part of the dilemma. Its logic leaves something to be desired. (c) If the iconophile now tries to slip away from these consequences, he may claim that he only paints the image of the flesh. This, however, is liable to the additional charge of Nestorianism, since it implies that one thinks it possible to separate the divinity from the humanity of Christ.[61]

The argument is polemical, but is it a sophism, in the sense of just a construction made up to target the opponent—i.e. an *ad hominem* argument—or for some different and hidden agenda? I have the impression that it has seldom been taken with sufficient seriousness *qua* theological argument. There is something quite strange with the whole situation. For centuries the Christian world had been gradually filled with splendid buildings, elaborate liturgical practices, symbols, and images, then one of these elements is challenged, not superficially,

[60] Mansi xiii, 252a–b; Krannich et al. (2002), 40; Hennephof (1969), 66; translation in Krannich et al. (2002), 41 ('und es bedeutet der Name "Christus" Gott und Mensch'); Gero (1977), 74; Sahas (1988) 83–4. There is something strange with the way Sahas (1988), 83, and Gero (1977), 74, treat the *λοιπὸν καὶ εἰκὼν Θεοῦ καὶ ἀνθρώπου*. Gero translates it 'Then it is an image of Christ as well as of man'—but the Greek has *Θεοῦ*. And Sahas seems to have missed these words all together.

[61] Mansi xiii, 256a–b; Krannich et al. (2002), 40; Hennephof (1969), 66; translated in Krannich et al. (2002), 41; Gero (1977), 75; Sahas (1988) 87. The question of whether the *Peuseis* of Constantine V had any influence on this section of the Definition is not particularly important for our argument. We will return to the first of the *Peuseis* when we address the topic of 'true image' in Chapter 4. On the *Peuseis* cf. Ostrogorsky (1964), Gero (1977), Hennephof (1969), Sahas (1988), Brubaker and Haldon (2011).

but with sophisticated, theological criticism. The argument does not just fall back on Old Testament prohibitions, but is Christological and ontological. The challenge concerns the ontological *possibilities* of Christian images and sheds a light of suspicion on the legitimacy of images as a source of theological insight and on the veneration offered to these alleged media of divine truth. Even if the consistency of the argument as such is suspect the iconoclast objection should be treated seriously: how is it possible to make a *true image* of Christ?

As already said, the iconoclast Definition is preserved in the acts of the council of Nicaea from 787. The iconoclast Definition was read out and responded to in the sixth session of the council. Bishop Gregory of Neocaesarea read from the Definition and a deacon read in the interval from an already composed refutation.[62] The deacon's responses contain interesting material, but do not seem to get to the core of the iconoclast arguments. The iconoclast accusations of Arianism, monophysitism, and Nestorianism are treated as sophisms and not as polemical challenges backed by serious concerns and arguments. Interwoven with rhetorical invectives, the refutation touches upon the problems, but one has to consult Theodore's treatises in order to find a deeper engagement with iconoclast argumentation.

The council of 787 claims that images are not an innovation, but belong to the ancient tradition of the church.[63] It is claimed that the tradition of images goes back to the days of the apostles. Of course, the modern historian cannot endorse such a claim, but even so I argue in the Appendix that the *conditions* for the making of figurative art are already present in primitive Christianity. The council further considers that the Quinisext council is a continuation of the Sixth Ecumenical Council and that its canon 82 has ecumenical authority.[64] The council teaches that Word and Image are both media for evangelical truth; a story in writing declares the same as what is seen in the icon, and it is not so much what is seen as what is *signified* (*ἐνσημαινόμενα*) that matters.[65]

When it comes to the dilemma put by the iconoclast council, the charge of Nestorianism is addressed first.[66] The document read out by the deacon states the conventional view that Nestorius teaches two

[62] The text is translated in Sahas (1988).
[63] Mansi xiii, 208c, 217c–d; Sahas (1988), 52 and 59.
[64] Mansi xiii, 220b–e; Sahas (1988), 60–1.
[65] Mansi xiii, 220e, 232b–c; Sahas (1988), 61 and 69.
[66] Mansi xiii, 241e–244c; translated in Sahas (1988), 77–8.

sons, the one is the Logos of the Father, the other is born from Mary. Of course, the iconophiles deny the accusation of such teaching as an insult. The icon painter makes an icon of the Logos in so far as He became flesh:[67] 'For God the Word circumscribed Himself when He came to us in the flesh.' Further it is stated that no one, of course, has thought that he can reproduce the divinity with colours. The iconophile formulas stick to the terminology of the unity of Christ, but state that the icon resembles the prototype not essentially, but with regard to name and to 'the position of the members which can be characterized'. It is further said that a painting of a human being does not have a *soul* in it, but it would be ridiculous to say that the painter for that reason has split the soul from the body. Nor is the nature or substance of the body present in the icon.

These iconophile arguments are not wrong in any sense, but they are not sufficiently developed to ward off the charge. One could just ask: but if Christ is one, and if the painter is able to paint only one aspect (i.e. the human) of the whole unity (of divinity and humanity) that is Christ, does not his image falsify the conception of Christ? It seems to me legitimate to ask whether the icon can be a proper 'theological object', a medium of theological insight. However, the iconophile council does not address such questions at all. And to say that the Logos circumscribed *Himself* when He became man is to open the critical question of whether, how, or to what degree His divinity suffered circumscription. There is lacking a proper ontological clarification of several issues here, and equally a lack of argumentation for the icon as a proper medium of theological insight.[68]

Later on Bishop Gregory read the part of the iconoclast Definition commented on above, viz. that the denotation of the name of Christ is God and man.[69] The answer states once more that what is depicted is 'that nature of His according to which He has been seen, not that according to which He is invisible; the latter is uncircumscribable'. Christ, it is claimed, is depicted according to His human nature. It seems that both iconoclasts and iconophiles at this stage of the controversy

[67] Sahas's (1988) translation.

[68] Thorne (2003), 86, says the iconophile council refused to respond to the philosophical argument from Christology of the council of 754, but instead answered with legend, hagiography, and tradition. I disagree somewhat with this verdict. The council produces arguments, but they are not sufficiently elaborated.

[69] Mansi xiii, 252a–b; translated in Sahas (1988) 83–4. Cf. the whole sequence with the iconodule response: Mansi xiii, 252a–256a; Sahas (1988), 83–7.

lack a clear notion of *what* the subject of painting would be, nature or hypostasis. As we shall see later, this is one of the things Theodore addresses. However, the iconophile council has already stated that what is painted is 'the position of the members which can be characterized', but this is too thin to be a proper clarification of anything even if it suggests what should be further investigated: the ontology of the *humanized* state of the hypostasis of the Logos. When the sequence of the argument comes to the charge of circumscription, the deacon's iconophile answer explicitly denies that there is circumscription of the Godhead: even if wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger, the divinity is not circumscribed together with the human nature.[70]

There are many more details in the answer given to the iconoclast Definition by the ecumenical council, but we shall leave it at that. As we can see, even if the iconophile council tends to consider it a piece of rhetoric and eristic, the iconoclast Definition raises important issues that are only partly conceived and addressed in 787. The main issue is how a manufactured piece of art may be a *true image of God*. Against this background we turn to St Theodore the Studite in order to see whether he takes up the challenges properly. Before we go into his defence of the icon, however, we shall investigate his method and logic.

[70] Mansi xiii, 253d–e; Sahas (1988), 86–7.

1

Method and Logic in Theodore's Treatises

This chapter is on St Theodore's methodology, his education, and knowledge of logic. By methodology I mean the way he structures his refutations and makes his arguments, so that he may treat the iconoclast challenges systematically. The section on education leads up to the treatment of logic. When it comes to logic as such one often thinks of it as a tool for argumentation, and in the present connection it works as such. Theodore's mastery of logic has some interest in its own right for two reasons: (1) It has historical interest since it witnesses to the knowledge of a certain kind of logic in early ninth-century Byzantium, and (2) it has philosophical interest because of some innovation on his part—if my interpretation is correct.

METHOD

The *Antirrhetici tres adversus iconomachos* contains, as the title says, three refutations. These three texts, however, vary in character. Each refutation has an introduction in which Theodore states some methodological preliminaries. The introduction to the first refutation sketches a general methodology that seems to fit the argumentative structure of all three. However, the unity of the three refutations is not obvious. They belong together thematically but the editing is rather superficial.

In the introduction to the first refutation Theodore initially makes a distinction between heresy and truth.[1] His plan is to clarify what he calls the *confirmatory demonstrations* (τὰς συστατικὰς ἀποδείξεις) of

[1] Introduction to *Antirrheticus* I, PG 99: 328d–329a.

the controverted issues.[2] He probably uses this term because he puts forward arguments or demonstrations intended to *confirm certain beliefs*. His writings are refutations of what he considers a heretical position and, in addition, they are obviously designed to confirm the truth of the iconophile position. He says that arguments will be put forward antithetically (*κατὰ ἀντίθεσιν*) so that one may see by juxtaposition (*διὰ τῆς παραθέσεως*) his own arguments and those of his opponent and thus be able to distinguish truth from falsehood.[3] All three refutations are characterized by the procedure of argument and counter-argument or what generally could be called *pro et contra* argumentation, that is argumentation for and against a certain position or positions. The basic positions would be 'It is legitimate and desirable to manufacture and venerate the icon of Christ' and 'It is not legitimate and desirable to manufacture and venerate the icon of Christ'. The first refutation starts with a claim made by Theodore (that Christian worship is unified) that is answered by the citation of an iconoclast argument (that iconophile worship is not unified) and then the discussion continues with alternate claims until Theodore ends the text with a list of anathemas in favour of the iconophile position.[4]

The first refutation should not need much editing in order to be turned into a kind of dialogue. In the second refutation Theodore explicitly presents two persons, an orthodox and an iconoclast, in discussion with one another (*κατὰ ἀντιβολὴν*) and designs the text as a dialogue.[5] The third refutation is the longest and it is divided into four sections. In this text Theodore chooses a style of writing that is more like a treatise even if he quotes eighteen iconoclast arguments that are answered. In that way the refutation may look like a polemical question-and-answer or problem-and-answer treatise. It is essentially a treatment of diverse aspects of the controverted issue and a refutation of the iconoclast heresy.

[2] Introduction to *Antirrheticus* 1, PG 99: 329a. Roth (Theodore the Studite, *On the Holy Icons*), 19, translates the Greek term as 'component arguments', a phrase I find difficult to understand. Cattoi (Theodore the Studite: *Writings on Iconoclasm*), 45, has 'supporting arguments', which I find more reasonable. I suggest that 'confirmatory demonstrations' is useful. This translation fits into the picture of Theodore's arguments. See the section on Argument below.

[3] Introduction to *Antirrheticus* 1, PG 99: 329a–b.

[4] *Antirrheticus* 1.20, PG 99: 349b–352b.

[5] Introduction to *Antirrheticus* 2, PG 99: 353b.

The first refutation could easily be made into a dialogue, while the second is explicitly written as a dialogue.[6] What kind of dialogue do we find here? The question is reasonable even if somehow difficult to answer. The world of both ancient and Byzantine literature abounds in dialogues. However, the question is difficult to answer since dialogues vary much in form and content. It would be convenient if one could group dialogues together in a kind of Porphyrian tree with species and sub-species. However, this task goes far beyond the scope of the present book. What is well known to most people is that Plato wrote dialogues, but it is not even easy to make a taxonomy of these. What one usually calls Plato's early Socratic dialogues can be said to have three characteristics: (1) the question discussed originates in ordinary life, (2) the purpose is the definition of a moral or religious concept, and (3) even though a series of definitions is elicited from the respondents no definition is adopted in the end. The dialogues end in what one calls an *aporia*, i.e. in a puzzle with no obvious way out. These are not the only Platonic dialogues that end in *aporia*. There is often no conclusion or no piece of Socratic or Platonic doctrine as an outcome. Cameron says, 'Inevitably, Christian dialogue had a purpose; it was not dialogue for dialogue's sake.'[7] However, it would likewise be wrong to think that Platonic dialogues had no purpose or were for the sake of dialoguing only. The reason why Platonic dialogues often are open-ended may have to do with certain convictions about the nature of knowledge and its discovery and transmission.

The late antique Christian world and Byzantium did not see the end of dialogue-writing. However, there is, as Cameron shows, no typical dialogue.[8] In order not to make a claim that is too far-reaching, we can say that some Christian dialogues are polemical with a foregone conclusion.[9] The interlocutors may from the start be identified as orthodox and heretic—as in Theodore's (first and) second refutation—as Christian and Jew, or Christian and Muslim, or generally in such a way that it is rather easy to identify the author's sense of the true and the wrong opinions. In such cases it is of course also tempting for the writer of the dialogue to design the arguments of the opponent in such a way that they sound stupid and unphilosophical. In short one constructs

[6] Cattoi (Theodore the Studite, *Writings on Iconoclasm*) has edited his English translation of the first refutation as a dialogue.

[7] Cameron (2014), 55.

[8] Cameron (2014), 54.

[9] On this see Cameron (2014).

a straw man in order to win the battle more easily. It is probably also the case that 'heretical' opinions were put forward and circulated in a 'shorthand' form that distorted sophisticated arguments into simple and obviously wrong propositions. How does Theodore fit into this picture?

The purpose of the dialogue in the second refutation is, as we may expect, to refute one doctrine and defend another. The dialogue, as well as the whole set of refutations, is not in any sense open-ended. The tone is heavily polemical. However, we shall have to modify these observations a bit: even if the tone is polemical and the style of writing is analytical, there emerges from the whole set of refutations a synthesis, viz. a doctrine of icons. Secondly, it is *not* obvious to the present author that Theodore systematically uses a straw man or distorts iconoclast arguments so that they are easily refuted. (What has just been stated is relevant for all three texts.) The discussion is not set in any scene of ordinary life. It is the propositions put forward as claims and counter-arguments that matter. The dialogue is not written as a pastime for pleasure, but concerns a matter of the greatest importance: correct Christian doctrine. If we compare Theodore's dialogue in the second refutation with some other Christian dialogues, this lack of a *proemium* is rather striking. Of course, the following three specimens have all a definite purpose: to argue for the correct Christian teaching (even if St Gregory's dialogue raises some important issues in a slightly daring way). They do, however, at least furnish some illusion of being set in a live situation. In St Gregory of Nyssa's *On the Soul and the Resurrection* the author sets the scene when Gregory himself, full of grief, enters the chamber of his sister's deathbed and in that way lays down the premises for a conversation on death, the fate of the soul, and the future resurrection.[10] Aeneas of Gaza's *Theophrastus*, almost in a Platonic-like vein, tells of how Euxitheus arrived in Alexandria by accident.[11] The ship was headed for Athens, but went off course due to a heavy wind. In Alexandria he meets Aegyptus and is taken by him to Theophrastus, a learned pagan philosopher. A discussion ensues between Euxitheus and Theophrastus on transmigration, the fate of the soul, and the resurrection. Zacharias of Mytilene's *Ammonius*

[10] Cf. St Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Soul and the Resurrection*, translated by Catharine P. Roth (1993).

[11] Both Aeneas and Zacharias are translated in Aeneas of Gaza, *Theophrastus* with Zacharias of Mytilene, *Ammonius*, translated by Sebastian Gertz, John Dillon, and Donald Russell (2012).

also describes a situation that gives rise to a discussion on controverted topics, mainly cosmological, between representatives of paganism and Christianity. Somehow all these three dialogues create at least some sense of a situation or even a social context within which the dialogue takes place. Maybe Gregory supplies the most moving scene. In St Maximus the Confessor's *Ascetic Life*, on the other hand, we find a dialogue of another kind.[12] It jumps immediately, in the first lines, to the topic: 'A brother asked an old man and said: "Please, Father, tell me: What was the purpose of the Lord's becoming man?"' What follows is a question-and-answer conversation in a monastic context that we can only guess is there. In this case the dialogue has, to use Champion's words, merged into 'a Christian variety of question and answer literature (*Erotapokriseis*) which was designed to place power in the hands of specifically Christian teachers'.[13]

The dialogues by Aeneas of Gaza and Zacharias of Mytilene are definitely the most polemical among these examples of Christian dialogues.[14] Aeneas, however, treats pagan material with some respect, while Zacharias is more aggressive and depreciative, labelling pagan learning as at odds with Christian doctrine and stupid etc. Even if Theodore may characterize his opponent's opinions negatively, the tone of his refutations is not marked by invective to such a degree as is the *Ammonius*. It also seems that the author of the latter is not on a par with his Neoplatonist opponents, while Theodore definitely knows the iconoclast arguments and, as we shall see below, does not tamper with them so as to make it easier for himself to refute iconoclasm.

Theodore's dialogues have this slight similarity with Maximus' *Ascetic Life* in that they lack a described scene. However, Maximus' dialogue is meant to be an edifying and authoritative question-and-answer text while Theodore's dialogues are polemical and accord with the strict, logical methodology he announces in the introduction to his first refutation: it is an antithetically framed juxtaposition of bare arguments *pro et contra* and nothing more. One may wonder why Theodore gave two of his treatises the shape of dialogues at all. I suppose

[12] St Maximus the Confessor, *The Ascetic Life*, *The Four Centuries on Charity*, translated by Polycarp Sherwood (1955).

[13] Champion (2014), 64.

[14] See the interesting analyses of these two authors plus Procopius of Gaza in Champion (2014). According to Champion, the works of these authors reflect a situation in which there is a struggle for cultural dominance and religious orthodoxy between Christians and Neoplatonists.

the answer is that in his case the dialogue form grew out of the method: if one arranges *pro et contra* arguments antithetically by juxtaposing them, the whole sequence may conveniently and with simple literary means be edited as a dialogue. It might also be the case that such an arrangement was chosen to benefit the reader: it will be easier to follow the development of an argument if it is presented through two interlocutors. I suspect that in this case the reason is as simple as that.

It is natural to ask if Theodore, an ardent iconophile, manages to enter the discussion with his iconoclast opponent, the steps of which he controls himself, in an unbiased way. A reader sympathetic to Theodore's cause may immediately take it for granted that he does. Modern sentiments, however, would normally nurture some suspicion in this regard.[15] On the other hand, it seems to me that the iconoclast arguments as presented by Theodore are not generally cast in a naïve or ridiculous way. The arguments seem in some degree to fit well into the iconoclast ideas as we find them in the Definition of the council of 754, and if there is no reason to believe that the council of 787 tampered with this Definition (we know it only from the acts of this council), we may say that Theodore's iconoclast opponent is not the result of simple distortion.[16] As a matter of fact, even if Theodore wins the day—which we of course expect him to do—he is not given an easy match, or to put it otherwise: *he does not give himself an easy match*. This observation, however, depends on what one identifies as the main issues. The two interlocutors (or the opposed arguments) delve into deep theological matters that are rather intricate. However, even if the statements of Theodore's iconoclast may now and then seem a bit strange or almost reduced to the ridiculous, this may have more than one explanation: on the one hand, the arguments may be put forward in a rather scanty fashion. They might seem to lack context or elaboration. In that case we should try to figure out if we may supply what is missing. The reason for this scantiness may just be that throughout continuous debates the arguments may have received what I called

[15] Since the iconophiles came out of the conflict as victors and, according to some modern scholars, rewrote and designed the history to suit their own cause, and since influential modern scholars have approached the whole issue from the point of view of a nineteenth-century prejudice, the immediate hermeneutical attitude towards the ancients easily becomes one of suspicion. However, even if one should be professionally critical, one should resist the temptation to be suspicious to an exaggerated degree.

[16] That the Definition should have been tampered with at the council of 787 seems unlikely if one compares its argument with the replies read by the deacon, as they are not always relevant to the issues put forward.

above a 'shorthand' presentation. On the other hand, when arguments eventually seem to end in an obviously untenable assertion, it could well be that this is a natural result: this particular iconoclast view is in fact untenable. It happens now and then that people make strange claims and it happens now and then that people are wrong.

Theodore's first refutation is directed against arguments stemming from the first period of iconoclasm. In this regard the iconoclast Definition of the council of 754 is an important source of information. The second refutation presupposes the decisions of the second iconoclast period and the council of 815. However, the only shift in iconoclast views seems to be that icons are not to be labelled idols. On the other hand, the council of 815 adheres to the doctrinal legacy of first iconoclasm even if Theodore's iconoclast in the second refutation to some degree nominally and ambiguously tolerates the manufacture and presence of images. The third refutation is more of a systematically developed argument *pro et contra* for the icons. All three texts, however, presuppose a certain methodology and logical skill which we shall investigate more closely.

THEODORE'S EDUCATION

It is a significant development in iconophile thought of the eighth and ninth centuries that Aristotelian logic—or what is supposed to be Aristotelian logic—is introduced and used by St Theodore and St Nicephorus of Constantinople.[17] St John of Damascus had composed a compendium of some of this kind of logic but he did not apply it in his treatises against the iconoclasts.[18] It is less surprising that John knows some aspects of this kind of logic since he lived in the Middle East where in late antiquity there were local centres of learning, not that far from the intellectual stimulus of Alexandria. But how was such knowledge transferred to Constantinople? One hypothesis could be that the Christian Neoplatonist Stephanus, the pupil of John Philoponus in Alexandria, moved to Constantinople about 610 and

[17] Cf. Parry (1996), 52.

[18] This work is Johannes von Damaskos, *Dialectica*, edited by Kotter (1969); it is translated by J. R. Chase in the Fathers of the Church series, Saint John of Damascus, *Writings* (1958, reprinted 1970).

brought with him a whole pile of books.[19] However, there is no scholarly agreement on whether he did so or not. There is, in short, a lot we do not know about possible routes of transmission. There is still work to be done in this field.

It is, fortunately, not necessary in the present case to have a solution to the question of transmission. What we may notice is that iconophile thinkers applied knowledge of what they held to be Aristotelian logic to the issues of the controversy. We are at least in the favourable position of being able to investigate the nature and quality of Theodore's logic. It may be measured historically with regard to achievements in the tradition of the Aristotelian commentators and formally with respect to its quality.

What do we know about Theodore's education? Gardner says the family into which he was born was 'intimately connected with the administration of the imperial government and intensely susceptible to the religious influences around'.[20] This in itself suggests that by birth he belonged to the level of society in which young men were expected to receive a solid education. However, drawing on Theodore's 'lives', letters, and homilies, Gardner's presentation of his education is rather meagre.[21] According to Gardner, Theodore's biographer 'in want of material, falls back on commonplace statements with moralising commentaries'.[22] Theodore studied grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric. Gardner says: 'The study of Dialectic was, of course, based on Aristotle.' One may suppose this to be correct, but one might still wonder how we may *know* this, and exactly which Aristotelian works could have been read.

Cholij, in his more recent treatment of Theodore's biography, does not bring in much that substantially broadens the picture painted by Gardner. After Theodore had fulfilled his elementary education he would have moved on to 'his secondary or general education', equivalent to the medieval *trivium* (grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric) and *quadrivium* (arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy).[23] Afterwards, Cholij says, Theodore would be ready for higher studies: 'At this time in Constantinople there is no known organized educational institution that Theodore could have been sent to for his education, and it is

[19] For divergent opinions on this cf. Armstrong, ed. (1980), 483; Kazhdan, ed. (1991), 1953; Sorabji, ed. (1990), 311 and 16; Wilson (1983), 47.

[20] Gardner (1905), 14.

[21] Gardner (1905), 14–30.

[22] Gardner (1905), 19.

[23] Cholij (2010), 19.

to be presumed that all his learning was directed by private tutors.' Cholij refers to one *vita* that claims that Theodore 'learnt from philosophers the whole of philosophy, including dialectic and demonstration', but thinks this saying is 'dictated more by the canons of the hagiographical genre than by the evidence available'.[24] Cholij further says that modern scholars have not been slow in pointing out that 'Theodore is not particularly distinguished by the rhetorical skill, classical background, or literary sophistication expected of one who has supposedly achieved the heights of learning'.[25] Cholij also has some depreciative remarks on Theodore's mastery of argumentation to which we shall return in this chapter.[26]

Fatouros published a critical edition of Theodore's letters in 1991 that is a scholarly achievement. Fatouros keeps close to the sources in his introduction and says there are four variants of the *vita*.[27] Three of these lives seem to depend on the fourth, which must then be the oldest one.[28] Even so it was written forty-two years after Theodore's death and the author had to rely on second-hand material. However, it tells us that Theodore after elementary education studied grammar, dialectic, rhetoric, and theology.[29] Fatouros has an interesting footnote where he points to modern authors who claim that Theodore studied philosophy.[30] However, Fatouros is without doubt correct when he observes that philosophy means theology, which has been one of its connotations for centuries in the Christian tradition.

It is quite obvious that Theodore had some higher education and it is highly probable that during this education he acquired some knowledge of philosophy proper and not only of theology.[31] What would be most interesting, however, is the answer to the question of how he became acquainted with (what he holds to be) Aristotelian logic. Even if the lives and his letters cannot help us with definite information here, there is another source that might put us in the position to make some tentative suggestions.

[24] Cholij (2010), 21. [25] Cholij (2010), 21. [26] Cholij (2010), 25.
[27] Theodori Studitae, *Epistulae*, ed. Georgios Fatouros (Berlin 1991), Part 1, 3–4.
[28] It is reproduced in PG 99: 233–328.
[29] Theodori Studitae, *Epistulae*, ed. Fatouros (1991), Part 1, 6.
[30] Theodori Studitae, *Epistulae*, ed. Fatouros (1991), Part 1, 6, note 24.
[31] Fatouros says (cf. Theodori Studitae, *Epistulae*, ed. Fatouros (1991), Part 1, 7) that Theodore had an exceptional talent for language ('ungewöhnliches Sprachtalent'), which, I suppose, could also witness to a talent for clear thinking.

Ignatius the Deacon wrote a life of the patriarch St Nicephorus.[32] In this life Ignatius gives a whole list of topics that Nicephorus studied privately in his early ascetic retirement. The list is an enumeration of topics that are quite specialized when it comes to logic: logical subject and predicate, whether a term is predicated of everything or nothing, the kinds of premises a syllogism may have, predicables, different modes and figures of syllogism, syllogism with one premise, etc.[33] Such a list of topics requires the availability of a series of books which must at least stem mainly from the late antique commentators on Aristotle. Nicephorus (*c.*750/58–828) and Theodore (759–826) were contemporaries (both being from Constantinople); if, therefore, this material was available to Nicephorus it would be strange if it was not available to Theodore as well.

Not much has been written on Byzantine philosophy in general or on Byzantine logic in particular. Klaus Oehler presented a few quite generalizing remarks in 1964, and Linos Benakis published an article in the 'Festschrift für Klaus Oehler' in 1988, but for our period the remarks are rather meagre.[34] Oehler says that there was a textbook by Photius on the *Topica*, which is repeated by Benakis.[35] If this is correct, we are still not much informed about the early ninth century.[36] If Theodore was not taught Aristotelian logic directly, he probably at least had access to some textbooks or compendia presenting such logic. However, such extant textbooks and compendia seem too meagre in scope to suffice as the basis of the level of knowledge possessed by Theodore.[37] However, since the contributions by Oehler and Benakis the situation has to some degree changed. There is a growing interest both in Byzantine philosophy and in Byzantine logic. One indication of this is the publication by Ierodiakonou in 2002 of the anthology

[32] This life is translated in Talbot, ed. (1998), 41–142.

[33] Talbot, ed. (1998), 54–5.

[34] Oehler (1964); Benakis (1988). Sten Ebbesen presented a paper in 1988, 'Western and Byzantine Approaches to Logic', which has not been published, but is available on the Internet. This paper unfortunately sheds no further light on the times of Theodore.

[35] Oehler (1964), 137; Benakis (1988), 4.

[36] Benakis (1994), vii–ix, however, contributes a preface for editions in a new series called 'Commentaria in Aristotelem Byzantina' that is quite interesting and creates some hope that editions of new material may remedy the situation to some degree.

[37] Cf. Roueché (1974 and 1980). Are not textbooks what the scholar usually appeals to when no known text is available? But do we know that a quantity of such textbooks did in fact exist?

Byzantine Philosophy and its Ancient Sources. The anthology contains several articles that deal with logical matters, but none of them is particularly relevant for the present period. The most interesting one is by Barnes, 'Syllogistic in the Anon Heiberg', but since it deals with material from the beginning of the eleventh century it is not very helpful for our purposes.[38]

There is another interesting development that may shed some light on the transmission of logic. This is the series of translations of the ancient commentators on Aristotle initiated by Richard Sorabji. These translations have probably stimulated the present interest in Byzantine philosophy mentioned above. Even if a lot of this material was already known in the original languages, the translations of these sources have definitely made a difference in the scholarly world. Among the most well known commentators Porphyry, Dexippus, Ammonius, Simplicius, Olympiodorus, and John Philoponus wrote commentaries on the *Categories*. Porphyry also wrote the *Isagoge*, which became very influential and was commented on by Ammonius, Elias, and David. Alexander of Aphrodisias, Ammonius, and Philoponus commented on the *Prior Analytics*. Alexander of Aphrodisias also commented on the *Topics*. All of this, however, brings us no farther than to the beginning of the seventh century. From the period between the sixth century and Theodore we know of some shorter logical texts on terminology, the application of some knowledge of logic by certain church fathers, and eventually we have St John of Damascus' *Dialectica*. There are, however, still unedited manuscripts so that we may hope that the gap may be filled in the years to come.

The following five logical subjects are present in Theodore's three refutations: some suggestions as to the nature of *universals*, a list of *categories*, an application of *homonymy*, an application of argumentative structures usually called *syllogisms*, and, finally, a use of the category of *relation*. We shall offer general comments on the first four topics in the present chapter. The category of the relative is, surprisingly enough, missing from Theodore's list of categories. We shall return to the relative in Chapter 4.

[38] On the other hand, Professor Christophe Erismann's research project in Vienna (2015–) on the reception of Aristotelian logic in the ninth century is very promising in this regard.

UNIVERSALS

The first logical topic we should look into is Theodore's notion of the universal. In this connection some introductory remarks on universal and particular, essence and hypostasis, might be helpful. In *De interpretatione* Aristotle divides things into universals and particulars.[39] Universals (*τὰ καθόλου*) have a nature such that they can be predicated of numerous subjects, like human being which can be predicated of particular human beings. Particulars (*τὰ καθ' ἕκαστον*) are such that cannot be predicated, like the particular man Callias. In the *Metaphysics* Aristotle says the universal is what it is since it is a whole containing many particulars each of which it is predicated of.[40] We may, for instance, say that 'Callias is a human being' and we may understand 'human being' as 'rational animal'. This is something Callias has in common with all other humans as well. We cannot, however, say that 'X is a Callias', since Callias is the name of a particular being and not a universal or a species of things. In the long history of philosophy between Aristotle and Theodore the universal was interpreted in several different ways. Sorabji identifies and comments on seven different senses.[41] One that is obvious for us, I suppose, is that universals are mental concepts in the human mind, like the genera and species Porphyry discusses.[42] In Neoplatonism the universal often turns up in at least three different senses, viz. as eternal concepts in the divine mind, as forms in material things, and as concepts in the human mind.[43] When the universal is conceived of as a form in matter, we may talk about an immanent universal even if we now leave it at that and not discuss the different ways this may be understood.

The universal has a complex history in Christian tradition as well. This history merges to some degree with the history of the development of the philosophical schools, especially with the tradition of Neoplatonist commentators on Aristotle. A crucial stage for a lot of later Christian terminology is reached with the Trinitarian controversies of the fourth century. The main terminological focus in these controversies, however, is universal and particular together with essence or nature and hypostasis. These two sets of terms are related to

[39] *De interpretatione*, ch. 7, 17a38–b1.
[40] *Metaphysics* bk 5, ch. 26, 1023b29–32.
[41] Sorabji (2004, vol. 3), 133–5.
[42] Cf. Porphyry, *Introduction*, ed. Barnes (2008).
[43] Cf. Simplicius, *On Aristotle Categories 5–6* (2013), 24, CAG vol. 8, 82–3.

one another. Essence is connected with the universal and hypostasis with the particular. These conceptual connections have been established since Aristotle. It will be sufficient for our purposes to comment briefly on how the relevant terms are applied by St Gregory of Nyssa in his *Ad Petrum fratrem de differentia usiae et hypostaseos*.[44] Gregory makes a distinction between two sets of names (*ὀνόματα*). (1) The first set has a more universal meaning (*καθολικωτέραν τινὰ τὴν σημασίαν ἔχει*) and is predicated of subjects that are plural and numerically various.[45] An example is human being: 'For he who says this, points with the name to the *common nature* and does not use the utterance to circumscribe the particular man who in a special way would be known by the name.' The universal 'man' (or 'human being') denotes the particulars in a general way. Peter is no more human being than are Andrew, John, and James. The universal term denotes the common nature or essence. (2) The second set of terms has a more specific reference (*ἰδικωτέραν ἔχει τὴν ἔνδειξιν*).[46] Examples are the names Peter and Timothy that have no reference to the common nature. These names separate certain things from the common meaning of, say, human being, and circumscribe them by the applied names. Since Peter is no more human being than Andrew, we need an additional dividing mark (*ὑποδιαστολή*) by which we would recognize the particular man Peter.[47] Now, the particulars that are denoted by proper names are the hypostases of humans. Gregory commits himself to the ontological description of a hypostasis as 'essence with properties'. We will find in Chapter 2 that this concept plays a role in Theodore as well.

We shall not discuss Gregory's doctrine any further. What we find in Theodore is an issue that makes it important for him to distinguish between essence and hypostasis, universal and particular. These distinctions enter the discussion of Christological topics and we return to a detailed analysis of such matters in Chapter 2. In the present section we shall simply summarize some philosophical notions without entering into the main issue in any depth. The universal is treated primarily

[44] The *Ad Petrum*, which was earlier held to be the thirty-eighth letter of St Basil, is now considered to be by Gregory, cf. Quasten (1994), 281 and Turcescu (1997), 63. For *Ad Petrum*, see St Basil, *The Letters*, transl. by R. J. Deferrari, vol. 1, 196–227 (1972).

[45] *Ad Petrum*, 196–7. [46] *Ad Petrum*, 198–9.

[47] The Greek term means a mark to divide words from one another (Liddell and Scott). Here it is applied in a logical sense to a difference that differentiates one individual from another.

in the first section of the third *Antirrheticus*.[48] Theodore puts forward the following iconoclast objection:

If Christ paradoxically assumed flesh in His own hypostasis, that is [flesh] without distinctive features since it does not signify a someone, but universal man, how then may this [flesh] be found to be tangible and portrayed in different colours? The argument is vain and the notion is false.[49]

Εἰ σάρκα παραδόξως ἀνέλαβεν ὁ Χριστὸς ἐν τῇ οἰκείᾳ ὑποστάσει· ἀχαρακτήριστον δὲ ὡς τὸν τινὰ μὴ σημαίνουσαν, ἀλλὰ τὸν καθόλου ἄνθρωπον· πῶς ἄρα ἐφικτὸν ταύτην ψηλαφωμένην εὑρίσκεσθαι, καὶ χρώμασι διαφόροις καταγράφεσθαι; φαῦλος ὁ λόγος, καὶ ἡ ἐπίνοια ψευδής.

The background for this argument is the iconoclast accusation that the iconophile separates the natures of Christ and ends up in effect in a kind of Nestorianism: if Christ is to be portrayed He must be a perceptible human particular. If so, by implication, He must have a human hypostasis in addition to His divine hypostasis. However, according to orthodox Christology, Christ is one hypostasis, viz. the hypostasis of the Son of God. He has no human hypostasis, but assumed human nature without a human hypostasis. The above iconoclast argument follows from this reasoning: how can Christ be portrayed if He assumed *universal* human nature since that nature is not anything tangible or coloured?

Theodore says universals subsist in individuals, like humanity in Peter and Paul, and if particulars do not exist, universals would not exist either.[50] Humanity, therefore, would not exist in Christ if it did not exist in Him 'as in someone' (*ὡς ἐν τινί*). Humanity as such is an essence and a universal; the 'someone' is the concretely existing hypostasis.

It is not immediately clear how Theodore understands the universal here. It seems obvious that for him it is *not* simply an abstraction dependent on the human mind, as if there were nothing in the constitution of particular beings that supported such concepts. Nor can it be a transcendent universal Form in the mind of God. Theodore actually uses the terminology of *existence* as when he says universals have

[48] *Antirrheticus* 3 Alpha 15–25, 34 and 36, PG 99: 396c–401c, 405c–408a.
[49] *Antirrheticus* 3 Alpha 15, PG 99: 396d (my translation).
[50] *Antirrheticus* 3 Alpha 15, PG 99: 396d–397a.

existence in the individuals (τὰ γὰρ καθόλου ἐν τοῖς ἀτόμοις τὴν ὕπαρξιν ἔχει). He definitely seems to nurture an idea of enmattered ('Aristotelian') forms that make it possible to gather a universal concept empirically from particulars. This notion is already in Porphyry and in the tradition stemming from him.

Further, there are things here that are parallel to theories put forward by St Maximus the Confessor. In *Ambiguum* 10 Maximus says that universals exist in particulars, and if the particulars perish, the universals will no longer be.[51] What Theodore says of the universal comes very close to this. Like Maximus he thinks that individuals or particulars are primary kinds of being and universals, on the other hand, are, in Theodore's words, 'seen' (ὁρᾶται) by the *mind* and *thought* (νοῦς and διάνοια). Now, when he says they are seen by the mind, this confirms the interpretation given above: universals somehow exist in the particulars and are for that reason seen or grasped by the intellect. It is an open question, however, whether Theodore was familiar with Maximus' tenth *Ambiguum*.

Theodore says that 'nature' as such is not circumscribed, and moving creatures are not species in the universal sense (οὐκ εἶδος τὸ τὸν καθόλου λόγον ἔχον), since such species are invisible, formless, shapeless, and therefore *uncircumscribed*.[52] How should we understand this? Universals exist in the particulars but particulars are *qua* particulars definitely circumscribed since they have additional properties and are delimited concretely by such categories, as we shall comment on below: they are contained in something, they are quantified and qualified, have postures, exist in place and time, have shapes and bodies. If the universals exist in individuals they must somehow be individualized in the latter, individualized that is by all sorts of particularizing properties and accidents. Nothing of this is true of the universal *qua* universal. The uncircumscribable nature of the universal consists in its indeterminate character compared with the particular, and it is not delimited to this and that individual being.[53] Particulars, on the other hand, are seen with the eyes, which are directed to sensible things (τὰ αἰσθητά). It seems safe to conclude that Theodore's doctrine of the universal stems from Peripatetic as well as from Cappadocian sources. No

[51] *Ambiguum* 10, PG 91: 1189c–d.

[52] *Antirrheticus* 3 Alpha 34 and 36, PG 99: 405c–d.

[53] In modern logic we say that general terms have extension, and this means that they are true of all things that fall under them. One could say that this extension (i.e. the group of particulars) is indefinite.

Neoplatonist would ever have conceded that particulars are primary beings by nature.

The iconoclast objection quoted above claims that Christ assumed universal human nature. If that were the case, Theodore argues, Christ could only be 'touched' and 'seen' in thought. He would not have been the subject of painting. To counter this Theodore adduces the Gospel story about Thomas (John 20:24–9) in order to demonstrate how absurd such a notion would be: the human finger of Thomas could touch even the resurrected Christ. In Chapter 2 we shall see how Theodore argues that the common nature must be conceived as having particularized existence in Christ.

CATEGORIES

We turn next to Theodore's list of categories. We find the following items enumerated in the third refutation:[54]

1) ἡ κατάληψις	Inclusion
2) ἡ ποσότης	Quantity
3) ἡ ποιότης	Quality
4) ἡ θέσις	Posture
5) οἱ τόποι	Places
6) οἱ χρόνοι	Times
7) τὰ σχήματα	Shapes
8) τὰ σώματα	Bodies

Theodore does not explicitly say that this is a list of *categories*, but since several traditional categories are included (quantity, quality, posture, place, time) it is reasonable to understand it as such. However, relation (πρός τι, σχέσις) is among important items that are missing. The list is presented as 'kinds of circumscription' (εἴδη περιγραφῆς) and is part of Theodore's argument that Christ appeared in the world in a particularized humanity. There is nothing in the context to indicate that Theodore considers the list as exhaustive. Here are his examples for each point:

[54] *Antirrheticus* 3 Alpha 13, PG 99: 396a–b.

1) 'He who is uncontainable was contained in the Virgin's womb'
2) 'He who is measureless became three cubits tall'
3) 'He who has no quality was formed in a certain quality'
4) 'He who had no position stood, sat, and lay down'
5) *The text gives no example of place.*
6) 'He who is timeless became twelve years old by increasing in age'
7) 'He who was shapeless appeared in the shape of a man'
8) 'He who is bodiless, when He had assumed a body, said to His disciples, "Take, eat, this is my body" '

The list together with the examples gives rise to some questions: (1) Why does he omit substance (or essence) from the list? (2) How should we understand shape in this list? (3) How should we distinguish inclusion from place? Before we turn to these challenges we shall put forward some material from the Aristotelian tradition for comparison. Aristotle's famous list of categories comprises the following items:

1)	οὐσία	Substance
2)	ποσόν	Quantity ('of any size or number')
3)	ποιόν	Quality ('of a certain quality')
4)	πρός τι	Relative
5)	ποῦ	Where?
6)	ποτέ	When?
7)	κεῖσθαι	Posture ('being-in-a-position')
8)	ἔχειν	Having
9)	ποιεῖν	Doing
10)	πάσχειν	Being affected ('suffering')

There is also a list of examples:[55]

1) man, horse
2) four-foot, five-foot
3) white, grammatical
4) double, half, larger
5) in the Lyceum, in the marketplace
6) yesterday, last year

[55] I follow Ackrill's translation in Aristotle, *Categories* (1963), 5. Ackrill has some interesting remarks on the heterogeneous character of both the names of the categories and the examples, 77–8.

7) is lying, is sitting
8) has shoes on, has armour on
9) cutting, burning
10) being cut, being burned

The list of categories with examples is found in the fourth chapter of the *Categories* (1b25–2a4). The categories are presented as a list of *legomena* or 'things said', but the examples are beings or entities. There is obviously a certain ambiguity here. According to Strange, 'Aristotle is quite unclear in the *Categories* about whether he is discussing entities or linguistic items.'[56] Ackrill, however, thinks the *Categories* are primarily treating things, not words.[57] This is an issue that occupied the ancient commentators as well. Porphyry says the topic is not things, but 'words used to signify things (*περὶ φωνῶν σημαντικῶν τῶν πραγμάτων*)'.[58] However this may be, the list of categories presented by Aristotle is repeated by Porphyry as well as by the later commentators.

Theodore's list, given above, is not an enumeration of linguistic expressions. It is not primarily meant to classify *legomena* or words used to signify things. Rather the list is an enumeration of ontological features that really circumscribe beings. (Even if the list also could be used to classify terms.) Let us turn to the questions asked above about Theodore's list. (1) Why does he not mention substance? One might suggest that substance is left out since the list enumerates kinds of circumscription of substance. However, I do not think this is the right solution. I suggest that he actually includes substance, but under another name or names. Porphyry can now and then mention *body* as a substitute for substance or as equivalent with substance.[59] Further, in the Neoplatonist commentators Simplicius and John Philoponus we find a certain development of the notion of matter that leads to some revisions of the traditional list of categories. According to Sorabji, Simplicius 'elevated both prime matter and space into the category of substance'.[60] It is even more interesting that Philoponus talks about a

[56] Strange's introduction to Porphyry, *On Aristotle Categories* (2014), 6.

[57] Cf. Ackrill's comments in Aristotle, *Categories and De Interpretatione* (1963), 71, 75, 78.

[58] Porphyry, *On Aristotle Categories* (2014), 32–3, CAG 4.1, 57. According to Strange, Porphyry chooses this approach to avoid certain metaphysical problems the Categories would pose for a Neoplatonist if the treatise should be about beings, cf. the introduction to Porphyry, *On Aristotle Categories* (2014), 3–7.

[59] Porphyry, *On Aristotle Categories* (2014), 78–9, CAG 4.1, 89.

[60] Sorabji (1988), 28. The foundation for this claim is found in Sorabji's interpretation of some lines in Simplicius' commentary on Aristotle's *Physics* (CAG 9 (1882), 623). There is an English translation in Simplicius, *Corollaries on Place and Time* (1992).

substantial quantity, viz. the three-dimensionality that is the *substance of body*.[61] This observation corresponds to something said by Theodore himself some sections before he introduces his list of categories. The third refutation is introduced with three examples of 'common notions'. The last one is quite interesting: 'every three-dimensional body, having a firm surface, that can be seen and touched, is circumscribed'.[62] This kind of body, Theodore claims, is obviously the kind of body assumed by Christ. One thing further should be relevant here: in what Roueché published as a 'Middle Byzantine Handbook of Logic Terminology' we find, under the heading of *οὐσία*, that substance is treated as equivalent with *σῶμα*: colours are not substance since they do not exist by themselves but in a body, which for that reason seems to fill the role of substance.[63] It is therefore not improbable that Theodore's 'bodies' is listed as the basic substance of accidents.

(2) But what then about shape? Shapes and bodies are mentioned last and it might be tempting to associate these two with one another. His example is that 'He who is shapeless appeared in the shape of a man.' Maybe shape is that which gives the fundamental figure or bodily shape to a *kind* of body. Theodore may have in mind that different kinds of (sensible) shapes circumscribe a substance, i.e. a body. But should we not then assume that this category is substance as well? This may at least be a probable interpretation.

(3) There is one more question: what about inclusion and place? If we fit Theodore's examples to his list of categories, the actual example of inclusion is 'He who is uncontainable was contained in the Virgin's womb.' Maybe inclusion is that something is *enveloped* by something else while place is the simple being-somewhere. This might be a meaningful distinction, even if one could ask if being-somewhere could not also include being-enveloped, for instance 'being in the church' would be a kind of envelopment in the building, and would it not be the other way around as well? It is, however, interesting to see that Porphyry, in his commentary on Aristotle's *Categories*, when he identifies different senses of being 'in', distinguishes between being in a place and being in a container (*ἀγγεῖον*).[64] Maybe some later author made a case for this distinction so that inclusion (*κατάληψις*) eventually turned up in a list of categories.

[61] Philoponus, *Contra Proclum*, ed. Rabe (1963), 424, translated in Philoponus, *Against Proclus On the Eternity of the World 9–11* (2010), 79.

[62] *Antirrheticus* 3 Alpha 1, PG 99: 389c.

[63] Roueché (1980), 92–3.

[64] Porphyry, *On Aristotle Categories* (2014), 60–1, CAG 4.1, 77–8.

To my knowledge there is no direct equivalent to be found of Theodore's list of categories or, as he calls it, circumscriptions. He may or may not have got this particular list from learning or reading, or he may just be collecting together structures that have the convenient function of delimiting sensible beings without taking them all from one already existing list. We may at least conclude that his categories contain items that are of use to him in his polemic against the iconoclasts. We return to the practical application of these categories in Chapter 2.

HOMONYMY

Another central topic in Theodore's logic is his application of *synonymy* and especially *homonymy*.[65] The purpose is to highlight a certain linguistic usage as when, for instance, we say about an image that 'This is Christ'. Theodore offers a philosophical interpretation of this way of speaking in which he intends to show as accurately as possible what it means to call the image Christ. His argument for the representative character of the image and the argument from homonymy are both in the end designed to legitimize the veneration of icons.[66] However, Theodore's conception of synonymy and homonymy presents us with some challenges as it does not seem to fit exactly into the traditional way this is conceived. Aristotle was the first to define synonymy and homonymy in the *Categories*.[67] Several Neoplatonist commentators on Aristotle discuss the topic. We also find short descriptions in some logic compendia from the seventh century, and St John of Damascus treats it in the eighth century. We shall have a look at this philosophical background first.

Aristotle's definitions are well known:[68] 'When things have only a name in common and the account of the essence (λόγος τῆς οὐσίας) which corresponds to the name is different, they are called homonymous.' 'When things have the name in common and the account of the essence that corresponds to the name is the same, they are called

[65] This is already alluded to in *Antirrheticus* 1.8, PG 99: 337b, but it is in *Antirrheticus* 2.16–17, PG 99: 360d–361d, that the topic is developed. Cf. Parry (1996), ch. 6, 52–63.

[66] What exactly this so-called 'veneration of images' consists in shall be defined more precisely in Chapter 4.

[67] *Categories*, ch. 1. [68] *Categories* 1: 1a1–2 and 1a6–7.

synonymous.' The example of homonymy is that both a man and a picture are called animals—this makes sense in Greek.[69] The name is the same, but the definition of the being of the entities differs, since the definition of man differs from the definition of picture. A more familiar example could be race, which might mean a tribe or a running contest. The example of synonymy is that a man and an ox are called animals. The name and the definition are the same for both, since a man and an ox are animals. It is also relevant for the present topic to notice that, according to Aristotle,[70] 'Whenever one thing is predicated of another as of a subject, all things said of what is predicated will be said of the subject also.' We may for example predicate human being of a particular human being like Paul, and in addition we may predicate the definition of human being: Paul is a rational animal. We shall find something similar to this in Theodore as well. Further, Ackrill thinks, as mentioned above, that the *Categories* are about things, not names, so that it is things (beings) that are homonyms and synonyms as well.[71]

There are a couple of developments of Aristotle's doctrine in the commentators that are worth noticing. Aristotle says the account of the essence (*λόγος τῆς οὐσίας*) corresponding with the name differs for homonyms but is the same for synonyms. Porphyry distinguishes in this regard between a definition (*ὁρισμός*) and a description (*ὑπογραφή*).[72] The *λόγος τῆς οὐσίας* in the strict sense is the *definition*, while the description may under some conditions be a substitute account. Simplicius explains that individuals cannot be defined but descriptions 'give an account of the property of a substance' (*τὴν ἰδιότητα τῆς οὐσίας*), while definitions define the essence. Such descriptions are especially relevant when proper names enter into the topic of homonymy and synonymy. This can be seen in Porphyry's example of the homonym Ajax when two men carry that name, viz. 'the son of Oeleus' and 'the son of Telamon'.[73] We find this in Simplicius as well.[74] We shall return to this notion of 'description' below. Another rather interesting thing is an example of homonymy used by Porphyry

[69] Cf. Ackrill's comment in Aristotle's *Categories and De Interpretatione* (1974), 71: 'The word translated "animal" originally meant just that; but it had come to be used also of pictures or other artistic representations (whether representations of animals or not).'

[70] Aristotle, *Categories*, 1b10–12.

[71] Aristotle's *Categories and De Interpretatione* (1974), 71.

[72] Porphyry, *On Aristotle Categories* (2014), 38, 43–4, CAG 4.1, 60 and 64–5.

[73] Porphyry, *On Aristotle Categories* (2014), 44, CAG 4.1, 64.

[74] Simplicius, *On Aristotle Categories* 1–4 (2003), 43, CAG 8, 29.

when both a man and an image of a man are called man.[75] In the same context Porphyry divides homonyms into chance homonyms and homonyms from thought. He further divides the latter into homonyms from similarity, from analogy, and from being related to a single principle. It is homonymy from similarity (*καθ' ὁμοίωσιν*) that is exemplified with the predication of the term man of a mortal rational animal and of an image of a man. As we shall see below, such an example of homonymy occurs in Christianized logic compendia as well.

There is probably no reason to dwell further on the long tradition of interpretation of the *Categories* for the sake of the present topic. Few new developments of particular importance for our purposes seem to occur between Porphyry and the Christianized logic compendia of the seventh century. Roueché introduced four and published two such short texts.[76] In his text no. 3 we find that homonymy occurs when two things have the name only in common, but the things differ.[77] The example given is similar to the one adduced by Porphyry above, viz. when an icon (image) and Paul both are called human being, but they differ as things. Roueché also published a 'middle byzantine handbook' of logic terminology, in which we find a section on homonymy and synonymy.[78] There it is said that homonyms are those (things) that have the name in common, or, alternatively, that homonymy is when two things have the name in common, but the things differ.[79] The example is the same as above. We find similar ideas in John of Damascus, but in one place he formulates himself in a way that is slightly different and this reminds one of how Theodore later puts it, even if with certain modifications. John of Damascus in one context defines homonymy and synonymy in accordance with what we find in other authors,[80] but he also says:

> Predication is synonymous when the subject admits both of the name and the definition of the name itself, for instance when animal is predicated of man. Man admits both of the name and the definition of the animal, because animal is an animate, sensible essence. Man admits of this definition, for man is an animate and sentient essence. On the other hand, predication is homonymous when the subject admits of the name, but not at all of the definition, as when the image of man admits of the name man, but does not admit of the definition of man. The definition of

[75] Porphyry, *On Aristotle Categories* (2014), 45–6, CAG 4.1, 65.
[76] Roueché (1974), 61–76.
[77] Roueché (1974), 72.
[78] Roueché (1980), 71–98.
[79] Roueché (1980), 94.
[80] Cf. *Dialectica*, ed. Kotter 1, 101–2.

> man is rational animal, mortal, receptive of intellect and knowledge. But the image is neither animal—for it is not animate—nor rational, nor receptive of intellect or knowledge.[81]

It is not quite obvious how we should understand this, so we need some examples in order to fully grasp his meaning. A traditional, Aristotelian example would be the following: if animal is predicated of two things like man and horse, then this predication is synonymous. The reason is that we naturally say animal of both and we may predicate the definition of animal on both in the same sense. However, if I understand the text above correctly, John says that when *one and the same thing* admits of both the name and the definition, then predication is synonymous. (This point is made by Porphyry as well.)[82] This leads us to the complementary saying about homonymy: the image of a human being admits of the name human being, but not of the definition of human being, since the image of a human being is not a rational animal, etc. If John had applied this to the icons, he could have said that the name Christ and the *description* of Christ might be said of Christ Himself (synonymously), but when it comes to the image we could have said that this is Christ—even if that could demand some explanation—but we could not predicate the description of Christ on the image. The predication of the name would therefore be homonymous. John, however, does not use his logic in discussions on and defence of the icons. It seems that there is a shift of emphasis here, from talk of homonyms and homonymy, synonyms and synonymy, to *homonymous and synonymous predication*.

We find this shift in Theodore as well. On the one hand, he knows the Aristotelian definition of homonymy. In his *Letter* 528 to John the Grammarian, he says:[83] 'Further, we are also taught by the definition of philosophy that homonyms are [those things] having only the name in common, but the statement of essence corresponding to the name differs like [in the case of] Christ and the picture' (*ἐπεὶ καὶ κατὰ φιλοσοφίας ὅρον ὁμώνυμά ἐστι διδασκόμεθα, ὧν ὄνομα μόνον κοινόν, ὁ δὲ κατὰ τοὔνομα λόγος τῆς οὐσίας ἕτερος, οἷον αὐτὸς Χριστὸς καὶ ὁ*

[81] *Dialectica*, ed. Kotter 1, 85–6.

[82] Porphyry, *On Aristotle Categories* (2014), 64 and 83, CAG 4.1, 80 and 92.

[83] Theodori Studitae, *Epistulae*, ed. Fatouros (1991), Part 2, *Letter* 528, 790. It is interesting to see that a couple of formulas here are the same as in Aristotle's *Categories*: *ὧν ὄνομα μόνον κοινόν* and *ὁ δὲ κατὰ τοὔνομα λόγος τῆς οὐσίας ἕτερος*. Theodore must be acquainted with a text from a commentator or a compendium where this is quoted or with Aristotle's own text.

ἐγγεγραμμένος). We find the same logic in, for example, the first *Antirrheticus* when Theodore says the image of Christ is Christ by virtue of homonymy, but an image of Christ by virtue of a relation (Ἀλλὰ Χριστὸν μὲν κατὰ τὸ ὁμώνυμον· Χριστοῦ δὲ κατὰ τὸ πρός τι).[84] It is quite clear that in this case the two 'things', Christ and his image, are homonyms since they have the name in common, but not the description corresponding to the name. The last claim, however, has a certain limitation, and we shall now explain how.

If we turn to the shift mentioned above we shall find that there is a difference between John and Theodore in the conception of homonymy. We will see this if we investigate a couple of quotations from the latter's refutations. In *Antirrheticus* 1 he says:

For whatever is said about the cause, the same can in all respects be said about the effect, however, in the first case, it is said properly, because it is [true] by nature; while in the second case, it is not said properly, because it is [true] in a homonymous way.[85]

Καὶ γὰρ ὅσα κατὰ τοῦ αἰτίου λέγεται, ταῦτα καὶ κατὰ τοῦ αἰτιατοῦ πάντως ῥηθήσεται· ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν κυρίως, ὅτι καὶ φύσει· τὰ δὲ οὐ κυρίως, ὅτι καὶ ὁμωνύμως.

The opposition is between saying something *properly* or *not properly*, the first being *natural*, the second by *homonymy*. Both John and Theodore connect synonymy and homonymy with *saying something*, i.e. with making statements about things. However, in another aspect of their teaching they differ: John says the *definition* cannot be predicated on, for instance, an image. Theodore says that whatever can be said about the cause, the same can be said of the effect, but homonymously. In *Antirrheticus* 2 we find the following, almost parallel statement:

For whatever is said concerning the prototype, the same may be said concerning the derivation; however, in case of the prototype it is said in a synonymous way, because it is said properly, but in the case of the derivation it is said in a homonymous way, since it is not said properly.[86]

Καὶ γὰρ ὅσα περὶ τοῦ πρωτοτύπου λέγεται, ταῦτα καὶ περὶ τοῦ παραγώγου ῥηθήσεται· ἀλλ' ἐπὶ μὲν τοῦ πρωτοτύπου συνωνύμως, ὅτι καὶ κυρίως· ἐπὶ δὲ τοῦ παραγώγου ὁμωνύμως, ὅτι καὶ οὐ κυρίως.

[84] *Antirrheticus* 1.11, PG 99: 341c.
[85] *Antirrheticus* 1.8, PG 99: 337b (my translation).
[86] *Antirrheticus* 2.16, PG 99: 360d (my translation).

If we put together what Theodore says, we get the following: to say something properly = to say something naturally = to say something synonymously. On the other hand, to say something not properly = to say something homonymously. What is the difference between the doctrines of Theodore and John in this regard? Even if John speaks of homonymous predication, he follows Aristotle strictly when the latter states that the *definition* of the essence cannot be predicated on that which homonymously is given a name. Theodore would probably agree with this, but what he does is to develop the notion of synonymous and homonymous predication in a direction that suits his case: one may predicate both the name and *whatever is said* either (i) synonymously of the prototype or (ii) homonymously of the derivation. Here something new seems to enter the picture. Maybe an example would make this clearer: let us say that we have two things, viz. Christ and His icon. Theodore accepts that to apply the name Christ to both is an instance of homonymy. However, when we predicate (a) the name Christ and (b) whatever is said about Christ to Christ Himself, this predication is synonymous. But when we predicate (a) the name of Christ and (b) whatever is said about Christ to the icon, this predication is homonymous.

I think the difference between John and Theodore is that the former speaks 'scientifically' but the latter speaks practically. While John is interested in the name and the definition of the essence in the realm of theoretical study (or philosophical theology), Theodore is not interested in definitions in the strict sense, but in *pragmatic sayings* that have to do with objects (mainly persons) in our practical life. If we should identify such sayings they would be more like predicates of properties and accidents, i.e. *descriptions*, than definitions. We shall investigate this a bit further.

We may first make the simple distinction between general and singular terms.[87] Among singular terms we may distinguish between names and definite descriptions.[88] These distinctions can be found in the Cappadocian fathers as well. Definite descriptions are descriptions that apply to one thing only. These are the kind of descriptions we found in Porphyry above. An example of a general term may be human being, and an example of a singular term may be Christ (a name) or

[87] The terminology may seem quite modern, but the notion is found even in the Cappadocian fathers. Cf. 'Basil', *Letter* 38 and Turcescu (1997), 63–82.

[88] This distinction may also be found in the Cappadocians, cf. 'Basil', *Letter* 38 and Turcescu (1997).

'He who was crucified on Golgotha' (a definite description).[89] In *Antirrheticus* I Theodore talks about two entities, viz. of Christ and His icon:[90] as Christ has been proclaimed from the beginning, the logos of His image has followed in accordance with its relationship to Him.[91] Theodore says there are as many ἀποδείξεις (declarations or statements) about Christ's image as about Christ Himself.[92] The same is true about the cross, since as much is said about the representation of the cross as about the cross itself. The principle that is stated here is simply that whatever is said of Christ Himself, this may be said of His image, and whatever is said of the cross may be said of its representation. We can illustrate this with the following example: one may say of a particular historical person that 'this is Christ'. Now, Christ is a singular term. One may further say, this is 'He who was born in Bethlehem', 'He whom John baptized in the Jordan', 'He who was transfigured on mount Tabor', and 'He who rose from the dead on the third day', all of which are definite descriptions. According to Theodore's technical terminology these things are said properly, naturally, or synonymously. However, in practical life such things may be said of an *image* as well. Pointing to an image of Christ it would be quite common to say that 'This is Christ'. Further, according to Theodore, one might also add the definite descriptions, and, he teaches, this amounts strictly speaking to 'say something not properly' or to 'say something in a homonymous way'. This practice, quite well known to us, requires, one might think, that the image somehow *represents* its prototype. I may, for instance, point to the picture of my father on the wall and say 'this is my father'. Everybody will find such a saying rather familiar. We shall return to this in Chapter 4.

Theodore's 'pragmatic' application of definite descriptions to an image is a development of suggestions already found in Porphyry, whether Theodore was familiar with the former's teachings or not. What I have in mind here is Porphyry's introduction of *description* as alternative to definition when it comes to give an account of something. Simplicius says that *particulars* cannot be defined, but they can be described, as we saw above. However, Theodore moved beyond

[89] Perhaps the last example is not precise enough, since several men were crucified on Golgotha. 'The divine person crucified on Golgotha' etc. may be better.

[90] *Antirrheticus* I.8, PG 99: 337b–c.

[91] I presume that 'the logos of His image' means 'the teaching about His image'.

[92] How should we understand ἀποδείξεις here? I don't believe it makes much sense to translate it 'proofs'; rather, declarations or statements make more sense.

Porphyry (but maybe not Simplicius) since Porphyry only comments on this in passing while Theodore has worked it out as a doctrine in his defence of the icon.

ARGUMENT

Theodore makes use of *arguments* in his refutations. In this section the term argument has a narrower meaning than it generally has in this book. An argument is a set of statements that stand in relation to one another. Some of these statements are premises and the premises present evidence for the conclusion. The term syllogism has a narrower sense than the term argument as used here. The Stoics defined an argument (λόγος) in general as 'a system containing premises and a conclusion'.[93] According to Mueller they used the term syllogism for arguments that are *valid*[94]—we return to validity below. Aristotle, however, defines a syllogism in much the same way as indicated above, i.e. as a group of statements that stand in relation to one another: 'A syllogism is a discourse in which, certain things being stated, something other than what is stated follows of necessity from their being so.'[95]

We say that arguments are *valid* or *invalid*. Mueller says, 'Aristotle is the founder of logic because he was the first person to see and state clearly that validity is formal or depends upon form.'[96] This is an outcome of Aristotle's *Analytica Priora*. Validity is a property of the *form* of the argument and should not be confused with its *truth*. An argument may have a valid form, but need not be true. Truth depends both on the form and on the quality of the premises: *if the form is valid then no argument with that form can have true premises and a false conclusion*.[97]

[93] Diogenes Laertius 7.45. [94] Mueller (1978), 3.
[95] *Analytica Priora* bk 1.1: 24b18–20. [96] Mueller (1978), 3.
[97] Parry (1996), 52, thinks Theodore voices some kind of scepticism towards the use of logic: 'Theodore would seem to be aware of the dangers of using the strictly syllogistic form of argument which allows false conclusions to be drawn from true premisses.' If the term *strictly syllogistic form* means a *valid deductive argument*, which one would expect it to mean, then this is mistaken: it is not possible for a valid deductive argument to have true premises and a false conclusion. I suppose that Theodore was aware of this.

Does Theodore voice any scepticism towards the use of logic? As we have seen, in the introduction to his first refutation he says he will sort out the *confirmatory demonstrations* (*τὰς συστατικὰς ἀποδείξεις*) of the matter at issue and in that way improve his own understanding and make himself able to share the results with others.[98] However, we should desire this to be further qualified so that we may understand what kind of 'demonstrations' or arguments Theodore has in mind. In the introduction to the third refutation he says he will make use of some syllogisms, not with the technical construction of systematic treatment—or rather 'silliness' (*φλυαρίαν*)—according to Aristotle (*κατὰ τὴν Ἀριστοτελικὴν τεχνολογίαν*), but in a simpler way.[99] This sounds somehow depreciative, as if such syllogisms have no real value. However, that should not deceive us. All three treatises are characterized by argumentation, even if it is primarily a characteristic of the last one. Again and again Theodore constructs arguments that may be analysed into premises and conclusions. He seems to base much of his opposition to iconoclasm on such argumentation. How well did Theodore master this kind of argumentation? Cholij says that the *Antirrhetici* 'prima facie seem to evidence critical and analytical powers and an ability to elaborate sophisticated argumentation when required to do so'.[100] He continues: 'However, these arguments were taken from a stockpile of Aristotelian arguments developed by iconophiles since the Second Council of Nicaea. To this author, they do not evidence any original *creative* thinking.'

I really doubt that this verdict is justified. Paul Alexander claims that arguments of this 'Aristotelian' or 'scholastic' kind first turned up in the writings Theodore and Nicephorus.[101] As far as I know, there is no documentation that there ever existed any such 'stockpile' of arguments. If one studies Theodore's text carefully the argumentation is fitted into a continuous analytic and synthetic reasoning, and it would be rather strange if Theodore just cut and pasted from a source unknown to us.

However, something seems to be conflated in Theodore's knowledge of arguments, not regarding the way he constructs them, but in his knowledge of the historical transmission of argumentative forms. According to Sorabji, the 'Aristotelians and the Stoics refused to accept each other's examples of syllogism':[102] 'Aristotle had conceived of

[98] Introduction to *Antirrheticus* 1, PG 99: 329a.
[99] Introduction to *Antirrheticus* 3, PG 99: 389a.
[100] Cholij (2010), 25.
[101] Cf. Alexander (1958), 190–1.
[102] Sorabji (2004, vol. 3), 250.

syllogisms as arguments with two premises and a conclusion.' An example could be the following:

All A are B
All C are A
All C are B

This is not yet an argument, but an argument *form* that is valid. From an Aristotelian point of view it belongs to the so-called 'first figure' and is traditionally known as Barbara. It is probably the most elementary and well-known syllogistic form. Terms (like mammals, mortal, and humans) should be substituted for the three letters in order to make it into an argument:

All mammals are mortal
All humans are mammals
All humans are mortal

In Theodore's refutations we may find arguments with a structure similar to this. In his first refutation he says: 'According to the heretics, to call Christ a mere man is totally absurd. "Circumscription", they say, "is characteristic of a mere man: therefore Christ is not a mere man, because He is not circumscribed." '[103] This argument has three statements or propositions: 'A mere man is circumscribed', 'Christ is not circumscribed', and 'Christ is not a mere man'. The argument may be construed in two different ways. The most obvious is the following:

A mere man is circumscribed
Christ is not circumscribed
Christ is not a mere man

This argument has the following form:

A is B
C is not B
C is not A

The argument is valid if we imply we are speaking of 'all' or 'every' A in the first premise. If we classify it according to Aristotelian forms this is (basically) in the second figure and is traditionally called

[103] *Antirrheticus* 1.4, PG 99: 332d (Roth's translation).

Camestres.[104] However, there is one deviation from a normal Aristotelian syllogism since the term Christ is a singular term and not a general term. Theodore would immediately accept the first premise and the conclusion, but the second premise would be open for discussion: in what respect is Christ not circumscribed? One could claim that as God He is not circumscribed, but in His assumption of human nature He becomes circumscribed. The second premise may be open for discussion, but even so both parties agree that Christ is not a mere man.

It is probably not a coincidence that the argument could be framed in an alternative way even if the most obvious way to take it is the one presented above. Alternatively it could be construed thus:

A mere man is circumscribed
Christ is not a mere man
Christ is not circumscribed

In this case the two parties would agree on the premises, but the conclusion would still be open to debate. However, if Theodore intends this argument to be detected he probably puts it forward for a certain reason. In this context he may tacitly be boasting of his knowledge of argumentative structure: the iconoclast may think he has struck a blow against the iconophile position, but Theodore has a card up his sleeve: the argument is *invalid*. The form is now like this:

A is B
C is not A
C is not B

A simple way to show the invalidity is with a so-called counter-example:

A mere man is circumscribed
Julius is not a mere man
Julius is not circumscribed

Julius is the name of my dog, and he is definitely circumscribed. The premises are true, but the conclusion is false because the form is invalid. If Theodore would construe the argument in the last fashion, we could say that he does not only know how to make valid and sound

[104] This classification is probably not immediately obvious, since Camestres would run thus: All A are B, No C is B, No C is A. The second premise of the above form states that C is not B, but this can be converted into No C is B. By the way, here we see the problem of the singular term in the above argument. It would be strange to say 'No Christ is circumscribed'.

arguments, he even knows how to utilize his knowledge of logic polemically by making invalid arguments that at face value, for those who have not mastered the art of logic, may look fine. Theodore presents the argument in such a way that because of its density there might be confusion about what the premises are and what the conclusion is. We shall see below that some of his paragraphs contain rather intricate and dense argumentation that could be analysed into more than one piece of argument.

Some of Theodore's arguments may certainly be presented in this Aristotelian syllogistic form. However, what we find in the refutations is mainly presented in another way: they look more like arguments of Stoic legacy. Sorabji says: 'Stoic syllogisms relate to each other whole propositions such as: it is day; it is light.'[105] It is conventional to symbolize such statements or propositions with the letters p and q, and one Stoic doctrine was that all such arguments could be reduced to five so-called indemonstrable forms:[106]

if p, then q; but p; therefore q
if p, then q; but not q; therefore not p
not both p and q; but p; therefore not q
p or q; but p; therefore not q
p or q; but not q; therefore p

What does it mean that these forms are indemonstrables? Mueller says Chrysippus used this word to suggest that they have no need of proof since their validity is immediately evident.[107] This seems reasonable. Theodore's text is full of arguments that fit in with (at least two) such forms. First we should note, however, that Theodore's text abounds in *conditional statements*.[108] A conditional statement is a complex statement composed of two statements joined with 'if…then…'. The form of a conditional statement is 'if p, then q'.[109] In the third refutation we have, for instance, the following:

Things that do not have the same properties have different essences. It is proper to divinity to be uncircumscribable, bodiless, and formless. It is

[105] Sorabji (2004, vol. 3), 250.

[106] See Diogenes Laertius 7.80–1. Above I have listed the indemonstrables in Sorabji's more convenient version.

[107] Mueller (1978), 11.

[108] For a modern and simple introduction to this, cf. Salmon (1973), 22–4.

[109] The 'if…then…' structure is of course a modern way of putting it. In Greek texts we may find the εἰ, but the 'if…then…' structure must be detected from the study of the relevant statements.

proper to humanity to be circumscribed, tangible, and three-dimensional. If, therefore, Christ is from both essences, He must be both uncircumscribable and circumscribed. If He is only one or the other, He is of only one essence of which He has the property—which is heretical.[110]

Ὧν οὐχ αἱ αὐταὶ ἰδιότητες, τούτων καὶ αἱ οὐσίαι διάφοροι. Ἴδίωμα δὲ θεότητος, τὸ ἀπερίγραπτον, τὸ ἀσώματον, τὸ ἀσχημάτιστον. Ἀνθρωπότητος δὲ, τὸ περιγραπτὸν, τὸ ψηλαφητὸν, τὸ τριχῇ διαστατόν. Εἰ οὖν ὁ Χριστὸς ἐξ ἀμφοῖν, πάντως ἀπερίγραπτός τε καὶ περιγραπτός. Εἰ δὲ θάτερον μόνον, μιᾶς ἄρα ἐστὶν οὐσίας ἧς ἔχει τὸ ἰδίωμα, ὅπερ ἀσεβές.

The analysis of this reasoning gives us three conditional statements: 'If things have not the same properties, then they have different essences.' 'If Christ is from both essences, then he must be both uncircumscribable and circumscribed.' 'If Christ is from one or the other essence only, then he is of only one essence.' The part of the sentence that is introduced with 'if' we call (in modern logic) the 'antecedent' and the part introduced with 'then' we call the 'consequent'. Both the antecedent and the consequent in conditional statements are themselves statements.

Conditional *arguments*, like those that can be generated from the Stoic indemonstrables listed above, are construed from conditional statements. In modern logic one may call this kind of logic sentence logic or propositional logic. We shall investigate some examples of this kind of logic in Theodore.

In the second refutation we find the following:

If you assert that Christ is not circumscribed because He is without solidity after His resurrection, you must also assert that He was not seen by His apostles. But if He is seen, He is circumscribed.[111]

Εἰ οὖν δοίης μὴ περιγεγράφθαι Χριστὸν διὰ τὸ ἔξω παχύτητος εἶναι μετὰ τὴν ἀνάστασιν, δώσεις καὶ μὴ ὦφθαι αὐτὸν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις. Εἰ δὲ ὤπται, καὶ περιγέγραπται.

The argument may be structured the following way:

If Christ was not circumscribed after the resurrection, then He was not seen by His apostles.

[110] *Antirrheticus* 3 Alpha 4, PG 99: 392b–c (my translation).
[111] *Antirrheticus* 2.45, PG 99: 384d (Roth's translation).

But he was seen by His apostles.
Therefore he was circumscribed after His resurrection.

This argument contains at least one, to speak dialectically, reputable opinion (ἔνδοξον)[112] for any Byzantine, viz. the second premise: 'He was seen by His apostles.' The first premise should probably be considered that way as well, since mainstream Byzantine tradition would deny any crumb of Docetism. The argument has the following form:

If ~p, then ~q
q (i.e. ~~q)
p (i.e. ~~p)[113]

This form may, however, be reduced to the more basic form of *denying the consequent*, often called *modus tollens*. This is a valid form and if the premises are true, the conclusion will also be true. This is the second of the Stoic indemonstrable forms referred to above and many of Theodore's arguments seem to suggest this particular form:

If p, then q
~q
~p

I say his arguments (often) 'suggest' this form, since in a lot of instances Theodore does not spell out the whole structure, but only gives some kind of outline. As we saw above it is in the introduction to the third refutation that Theodore announces his use of syllogisms, 'but in a simpler way'. However, I am not so sure that his 'syllogisms' are 'simple'. Rather, it seems to me that Theodore masters the art of making arguments if not to perfection then at least to a quite advanced degree. While we may locate argumentative structures in the first two refutations, it is the third part that abounds in such arguments. Here is one example:

If Christ cannot be circumscribed, neither can He suffer; for impassibility is equivalent to uncircumscribability. But He is able to suffer, as the Scriptures say. Therefore He is also circumscribable.[114]

[112] According to Aristotle's *Topics* bk 1, ch. 1, reputable opinions are the starting point of dialectical reasoning: 'Opinions are reputable which are accepted by everyone or by the majority or by the wise—i.e. by all, or by the majority, or by the most notable and reputable of them.'

[113] The ~ is a symbol of a negation, for instance ~p means 'not p'.

[114] *Antirrheticus* 3 Alpha 6, PG 99: 392d (Roth's translation).

Εἰ οὐ περιγραπτὸς ὁ Χριστὸς, οὐδὲ παθητός· ἐξ ἴσου γὰρ τῷ ἀπεριγράπτῳ τὸ ἀπαθές. Ἀλλὰ μὴν παθητὸς, καθά φησι τὰ λόγια· οὐκοῦν καὶ περιγραπτός.

We may structure the argument thus:

If Christ is not circumscribed, then He cannot suffer.
<u>But He is able to suffer.</u>
Therefore He is circumscribed.

This argument has a valid form, but as it is structured above it is incomplete.[115] This incompleteness is in the first premise: 'If Christ is not circumscribed, then He cannot suffer.' Is it obvious that uncircumscription entails impassibility? In the text itself, however, Theodore—probably because he sees the challenge—adds that 'impassibility is equivalent to uncircumscribability', which may be claimed to be sound. The basic form of the argument is the following:

If p, then q
<u>~q</u>
~p

This is once again the valid form of denying the consequent or modus tollens.

We shall try to formalize one more argument since it exemplifies another of the Stoic indemonstrables:

If what is shown in the image refers to the prototype, and if whenever there is a prototype there must also be an image (in accordance with the Lord's words, 'Whose is this image and inscription?' and his following words, to the questioners, 'Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's') then Christ, since He became like us, has an artificial image, which refers to Him by relation of likeness. But if He does not have an artificial image, then He is not what is called Christ. But Christ is, and is called, truth itself. Therefore He has an image, and its reference of veneration which passes over to Him is never cut off by a division of glory.[116]

[115] In *Analytica Priora* bk 1, ch. 1, 24b22–6, Aristotle says: 'I call a syllogism perfect which needs nothing other than what has been stated to make the necessity evident; a syllogism is imperfect if it needs either one or more things, which are indeed the necessary consequences of the terms set down, but have not been assumed in the propositions.'

[116] *Antirrheticus* 3 Beta 4, PG 99: 417d–420a (Roth's translation).

Εἰ ἡ τῆς εἰκόνος ἔνδειξις ἀναφορὰν ἔχει πρὸς τὸ πρωτότυπον· καὶ οὐκ ἔστι πρωτοτύπου ὄντος μὴ καὶ εἰκόνα εἶναι, κατὰ τὸ ὑπὸ τοῦ Κυρίου εἰρημένον, Τίνος ἡ εἰκὼν αὕτη καὶ ἡ ἐπιγραφή; καὶ ἐπαγαγόντος πρὸς τοὺς ἐρωτήσαντας, Ἀπόδοτε τὰ Καίσαρος Καίσαρι, καὶ τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῷ Θεῷ· ἄρα ἔχει ὁ Χριστὸς τεχνητὴν εἰκόνα, ὡς καθ' ἡμᾶς γεγονὼς, ἀναφερομένην πρὸς αὐτὸν διὰ τῆς ὁμοιωτικῆς ἐμφερείας. Εἰ δὲ μὴ ἔχει, οὐδὲ ἔστι τοῦθ' ὅπερ λέγεται Χριστός. Ἀλλὰ μὴν αὐτοαλήθεια Χριστὸς ἔστι τε καὶ ὀνομάζεται. Οὐκοῦν ἔχει καὶ εἰκόνα, ἧς ἡ ἀναφορὰ τῆς προσκυνήσεως ἐπ' αὐτὸν διαβαίνουσα, οὐδέποτε μερισμῷ δόξης διέσχισται.

This paragraph contains a highly complex argument. It is not difficult to identify the first conditional statement, which is 'If what is shown in the image refers to the prototype, and if whenever there is a prototype there must also be an image…then Christ, since He became like us, has an artificial image, which refers to Him by relation of likeness.' This, however, could (and I suppose should) be broken down into two simpler conditional statements: 'If what is shown in the image refers to the prototype, then the image of Christ refers to its prototype' and 'If whenever there is a prototype there must also be an image, then Christ (being a prototype) has an artificial image.' The paragraph suggests two possible conclusions, viz. 'Christ (being a prototype) has no artificial image' and 'Christ (being a prototype) has an artificial image.' This gives us the key to how the primary argument of the paragraph shall be construed, viz. thus:

> If whenever there is a prototype there must also be an image, then Christ (being a prototype) has an artificial image.
>
> Whenever there is a prototype there must not also be an image.
>
> Christ (being a prototype) has no artificial image.

This gives:

> If p, then q
> ~~p~~
> ~q

The form of the argument is the invalid form of denying the antecedent, and it is quite clear from the text that this is a conclusion Theodore does not accept.[117] He objects that if Christ has no image

[117] We shall see in Chapter 3 that Theodore might accept the second premise on certain conditions.

then he is not Christ. The reason for this is, of course, to be sought in the doctrine of the Incarnation.

The argument may alternatively be construed thus:

If whenever there is a prototype there must also be an image, then Christ (being a prototype) has an artificial image.
Whenever there is a prototype there must also be an image.
Christ (being a prototype) has an artificial image.

This gives:

If p, then q
p
q

This is an argument Theodore accepts and it has the logically valid form of *affirming the antecedent*, also called *modus ponens*, which answers to the first of the Stoic indemonstrables mentioned above.

I think we may conclude as suggested above, that Theodore knows his logic quite well and that he masters the art of making arguments. He even seems to play on his ability to construe arguments that are valid as well as invalid. Several of his paragraphs suggest that behind the condensed presentation of arguments there lies concentrated and detailed reflection. It is obvious that he must have learnt this logic either from education or from his own studies. However, I do not think one becomes capable of making such arguments from reading logic compendia with short definitions. Nor does it help, I think, to read large logical manuals. It definitely requires some kind of *training*. The question is where Theodore could have got such training. In any case material stemming from the late antique philosophical schools must have been available for him. Clearly also in the tradition of logic Theodore receives, Aristotelian and Stoic elements occurred together under an Aristotelian heading. If that were not the case, Theodore would not have identified his logic of mainly Stoic provenance with the Aristotelian tradition. We may probably draw the conclusion that his knowledge of logic came from sources that were mainly presented as Aristotelian. If we return to the *vita* of the patriarch Nicephorus mentioned above, there is at least one indication that Stoic material (or problems) turned up within an Aristotelian context. Nicephorus' biographer says, 'He inquired into what sort of syllogism has only one premise.' This is a Stoic topic that the Aristotelian Alexander of

Aphrodisias takes to task.[118] Even if Alexander's writings may have been available to Nicephorus and Theodore, Alexander is probably not the only source for the amount of logic the latter knows.

What is the usefulness of argumentative strategies like those we have seen above? In the introduction to the first refutation Theodore expresses the hope that he may strengthen his own understanding as well as share his findings with others.[119] A further benefit is, of course, that if Theodore can get his opponent to accept the premises of a valid argument, he can then claim that the conclusion is unavoidable also. The challenge is, obviously, to achieve agreement on the premises.

[118] Cf. Sorabji (2004, vol. 3), 252–3.
[119] *Antirrheticus* 1 Introduction, PG 99: 329a.

2

Circumscription

The subject of the present book is St Theodore's doctrine of the icon, and in particular his arguments for what constitutes a true image. This brings us to the vexed topic of Christology. The history of the Christological controversy is long and complex. Christological positions are many and diverse, and highly detailed. It is neither possible nor desirable to enter into the whole range of topics in what is just an introduction to the Christology worked out by Theodore in defence of the icon. However, some main points should be a helpful preparation for the intricate arguments discussed in the later sections of this chapter.

The orthodox understanding of Christ is that He is one person or hypostasis (the last term is preferred by the Greek fathers) comprising two different natures or essences, a divine and a human. The one hypostasis of Christ is the hypostasis of the Logos, the eternal Son of God, who is divine by nature. The Logos' becoming man means that the divine hypostasis of Christ with its divine nature assumed human nature without a human hypostasis from His Mother, the Theotokos. The technical term for this is 'hypostatic union': the natures or essences are unified in the one hypostasis. As a working definition we may think of a hypostasis as a concretely existing entity. In the world of time and space such an entity may for instance be an individual human being like Paul. (Divine hypostases are not 'individuals' in the same sense as entities in this world are, since in that case there will be three gods. They would, however, be concretely existing—even if that may be a rather vague term. We cannot go deeper into this topic here.) By contrast, what then is a nature or an essence? In the present context it will suffice if we take nature or essence to be what hypostases have in common, like human nature and divine nature: Paul, Peter, and John have human nature in common, while the three hypostases of the Trinity share the divine nature. Since such natures are in common,

they are somehow universals. (See the section on the universal in Chapter 1.) We should therefore keep in mind that a given entity has two sets or layers of characteristics, viz. essential characteristics and hypostatic characteristics that differentiate the one individual from the other in the same species. In the terminology of Porphyry, the latter kind of characteristics, which Theodore, following Basil and Gregory of Nyssa, calls ἰδιώματα, will be properties and accidents.[1] As a preconception we may stick to the idea that one individual differs from another of the same species because it holds a combination of ἰδιώματα that is unique for it, since the combination of such characteristics is different in another individual hypostasis. (See the section on categories in Chapter 1.)

In connection with the above there is another set of terms that are used extensively in the refutations, viz. the terminology of being circumscribed and not being circumscribed. As a preconception it would be helpful to keep in mind that a divine hypostasis having divine nature is uncircumscribed. In Theodore's discussion God is without limitations. When it comes to created beings, however, the situation is more complex. A human hypostasis is of course circumscribed, because it is bound to place and time and has delimiting quantitative and qualitative characteristics, but what about human nature? Human nature is not delimited in this way. It seems to me that according to Theodore it is a property of human nature to be circumscribed—to be the subject of definition is some kind of delimitation. However, we saw above (Chapter 1 on universals) that the universal human nature is somehow uncircumscribed. This has probably to do with the *extension* of the term. The exact way the circumscription of human nature should be understood is something we return to below.

The subject of the sections that follow is the ontology of the Incarnation. The main purpose of this chapter is to see how Theodore argues against the iconoclast dilemma described in the first chapter. His task is to show how Christ may be the subject of painting. In order to achieve this he moves into intricate discussions on how the natures or essences of divinity and humanity are unified in the one hypostasis of Christ in such a way that humanity becomes particularized without being constituted as a second hypostasis in the God–man. We shall first try to highlight the concepts of circumscription and uncircumscription and then move on to a description of iconoclast Christology

[1] Cf. Porphyry, *Introduction* (2008), 11–12, CAG 4.1, 12–13.

as presented by Theodore. Then we shift our focus to Theodore's Christology and certain problems connected with that, before we conclude with a section in which we focus on the subject of painting.

CIRCUMSCRIPTION AND CHRISTOLOGICAL TRADITION

The terms circumscribe, circumscription (*περιγράφω*, *περιγραφή*), and uncircumscribed (*ἀπερίγραπτος*, *ἀπερίγραφος*) have ontological implications. According to Liddell and Scott the verb *περιγράφω* has the concrete sense of drawing a line around something and circumscribe something geometrically. Further we have the more abstract sense of define and conclude, and generally to outline, delineate, and enclose. The noun *περιγραφή* means an outline, a circumference, a circumscribed (geometrical) figure, and may also be used in the abstract sense of a conclusion. The negative adjectives qualify something by negating a concrete as well as an abstract delineation.

Ancient and late antique philosophical literature does not seem to make much use of the particular terminology we are investigating. Even so the concept of limit and limitation plays an important role in ancient metaphysics and cosmology. In the scale of being the first principle is completely unlimited (uncircumscribed) while lower layers of being suffer limitation (circumscription) increasingly. However, the chaotic nature of unordered matter is somehow unlimited in nature as well. Christian literature, on the other hand, seems to make more use of these terms, both the positive and the negative ones. As we may guess, the terminology is used to characterize the difference between uncreated and created being. This may be illustrated by a quotation from St Gregory of Nyssa's *Ad Ablabium*:

> Only those things are enumerated by addition that are contemplated in their proper circumscription. This circumscription is discovered in bodily appearance and bulk, in place and in difference of figure and colour. That which is contemplated apart from these is free from the circumscription of these. That which is not circumscribed [in such a way] is not enumerated, and that which is not enumerated cannot be contemplated in plurality.[2]

[2] *Ad Ablabium* GNO 3.1, 53.

In Contra Eunomium he says, 'For nothing that is conceived [as being] in circumscription is divine, but it is proper to the Godhead to be present everywhere and to pervade all things and not to be limited by anything…'[3]

What we see here is an ontological application of the actual terms. However, it is of course not the use of words, but the understanding of a certain concept of being that is important. The terms characterize basic ontological facts of an entity and have to do with the possibility of applying predicates. We have circumscription when something is discovered within the limits of bodily characteristics which may be identified as having appearance and a definite magnitude. It is further discovered in a definite place, has figure, and is coloured. Gregory notes that God, who is free from such characteristics (predicates), is present everywhere, cannot be limited, is obviously without body and figure, and is in short uncircumscribed. One example of the use of the privative (which is not much frequent) is in a question he puts in the *Contra Eunomium*:[4] 'And what is the throne of the bodiless and uncircumscribable and figureless God?' In *Ambiguum* 7 St Maximus the Confessor stresses the difference between that which has no categorical (predicative) form at all and that which is constituted by all kinds of delimiting predicates.[5] In general it is a basic feature of created beings that they are limited by identifiable properties, and bodily beings are given as perceptible in time and place.

Circumscription in the ontological sense is a mark of belonging to a lower or sensible level of being. According to influential Christian thinkers like Gregory and Maximus, circumscription or limitation is a basic characteristic feature of created being. Only God is without circumscription or limitation. In himself God cannot be delineated, limited, and no perfection that we may imagine can be properly predicated on the divinity. It is a theological commonplace that the Godhead as such, of which we don't have a proper understanding of its spiritual perfections, is beyond all possibilities of being painted. But Christianity is based on the divine Economy, which means that the Son of God became in some particular way a creature. The Logos

[3] *Contra Eunomium* bk 3.1, GNO 2, 41.

[4] *Contra Eunomium* bk 1, GNO 1, 115.

[5] *Ambiguum* 7, PG 91: 1081b. Maximus does not use the term circumscription, but characterizes creatures as a whole as *τὰ πεπερασμένα*, and here it is the concept that matters, not the term.

who is uncircumscribable in His divine nature assumed somehow a circumscribed condition of being.

ICONOCLAST CHRISTOLOGY

The iconoclast Definition that was presented in the first chapter showed that the topic of *circumscription* was of primary importance in the controversy. The iconophile position is that the hypostatic union between the uncircumscribable divine nature of the Son of God and the circumscribable human nature results in an entity, viz. Jesus Christ, that may be the subject of painting. The iconoclast position, on the other hand, is that there can be no *true image* of Christ. The iconoclast attack points to a dilemma: if the iconophile claims there is a true image, then this image must do justice to both sides of Christ. However, this represents a seemingly inescapable dilemma that leads to one of two heretical positions, Nestorianism or a kind of monophysitism. Since none of this is acceptable there cannot be a true image. If the iconophile still wants to paint an image, he falls into idolatry since he falsifies the subject of painting. Theodore's iconoclast even argues that the humanity assumed by Christ would lack the features that would make painting possible. The most telling iconoclast statement of this is found in the third refutation:

An objection as from the iconoclasts: 'If Christ paradoxically assumed flesh in His own hypostasis, but flesh without characteristic features because it does not indicate a someone but rather universal man: how then is it possible for this flesh to be found tangible and to be portrayed in different colours? The argument is foolish and the idea is false.'[6]

Ἀντίθεσις ὡς ἐκ τῶν Εἰκονομάχων. Εἰ σάρκα παραδόξως ἀνέλαβεν ὁ Χριστὸς ἐν τῇ οἰκείᾳ ὑποστάσει· ἀχαρακτήριστον δὲ ὡς τὸν τινὰ μὴ σημαίνουσαν, ἀλλὰ τὸν καθόλου ἄνθρωπον· πῶς ἄρα ἐφικτὸν ταύτην ψηλαφωμένην εὑρίσκεσθαι, καὶ χρώμασι διαφόροις καταγράφεσθαι; φαῦλος ὁ λόγος, καὶ ἡ ἐπίνοια ψευδής.

This argument has an anti-Nestorian background: if the iconophile claims that Christ may be painted because of the Incarnation, then the

[6] *Antirrheticus* 3 Alpha 15, PG 99: 396c–d (my translation).

question is about what kind of humanity He assumed. If it is assumed as a hypostasis it would amount to Nestorianism. The alternative would be that He assumed universal human nature, but such a nature is intangible so painting will be impossible. It will in any case be foolish and false to claim that painting is possible.

What the iconoclast seems to deny is that Christ assumed distinguishing marks or properties and accidents (what Theodore calls the ἰδιώματα) that would *individualize* Him and make Him into a kind of concrete human being. The objection states that such an individuation amounts to assuming a 'someone'. So far it looks as if the iconoclast does not want to distinguish between a kind of individuation and an assumption of a human hypostasis. This iconoclast doctrine jeopardizes the achievements of the sophisticated Christology from the seventh century. Does the iconoclast really want to promote a Christology discordant with the achievements of the Christological settlement of the famous theologians and great councils? Probably not. I believe the argument is ad hoc and that it should not be taken as an indication that the iconoclast movement in general nurtured Christological heresy. What would be the ad hoc nature of the argument? It is simply put forward to challenge the iconophile idea of an individuated humanity of Christ, i.e. a humanity that could be painted. The iconoclast claims this implies the assumption of a 'someone'. We'll return to this concept below, in the section on Theodore's Christology. The iconoclast objection signalizes that the focus of the Christological argumentation will turn on the problem of individuation or, in other words, of circumscription.

There is much truth in Cattoi's claim that Theodore's refutations are to a large degree of a Christological nature.[7] They are Christological for the reason that a particular kind of Christology is needed in order to defend the possibility of painting Christ in an icon. In the introduction to this book it was said that both the iconophiles and the iconoclasts adhered to the tradition of Christological orthodoxy as defined by the great councils. On the other hand, the refutations make it possible to describe Theodore's Christology as well as the Christology of Theodore's iconoclast, and they seem to be at odds with one another. We need to ask, therefore, whether they are really different or if the difference is only apparent and due to the rhetorical character of the arguments. However, as said above, there is reason to believe that

[7] Theodore the Studite, *Writings on Iconoclasm*, transl. Cattoi (2015), 27.

the present iconoclast argument is to be understood as ad hoc and not as a presentation of a particular kind of iconoclast Christology.

On the other hand, Cattoi claims there is a difference between two different Christologies here. While Theodore follows mainstream Christological thought, the iconoclasts deviate in some degree from this. Cattoi describes a heretical group he calls the *agraptodocetae*:

> Agraptodocetism differed from Docetism because it does not claim that Christ's humanity was a phantom: however, it also went further from Aphthartodocetism, which affirmed Christ's humanity but denied that it could suffer, since according to the *agraptodocetae*, Christ 'lacked individual characteristics' (*acharacteriston*), because he was 'a man in general' (*anthropos katholou*).[8]

Even if Cattoi describes an ancestry of this heresy, it seems that his only two direct sources for its existence are Theodore and Nicephorus.[9] Parry also mentions the *agraptodocetae*, and says: 'It is the existential and historical reality of the God-man that iconophile writers are at pains to defend. Iconoclasm for them is simply another species of Docetism, or what Nicephorus prefers to call "Agraptodocetism".'[10] I think Parry is correct when he says that iconoclasm 'for them', i.e. for Theodore and Nicephorus, is this kind of heresy or—maybe more correct—that they *rhetorically* brand iconoclasm as such a heresy. Theodore accuses his iconoclast opponent of following those who say that Christ came only in appearance and fantasy (ἐν δοκήσει καὶ φαντασίᾳ).[11]

It looks as if John Meyendorff is the source of inspiration behind Cattoi's notion of agraptodocetism. Meyendorff comments on this alleged heresy in at least two places, both of which build upon the sayings of Theodore and Nicephorus on the matter.[12] Is it correct, as Meyendorff claims, that 'Iconoclasm was certainly another way of denying that Christ is man in a concrete and individual way'?[13] I really doubt that to be the case. It seems rather that Meyendorff as well as Cattoi after him are led astray by the rhetoric of the two defenders of the icons. It is within the dialectic of the rhetorical arguments themselves that Theodore's and Nicephorus' accusations are put forward.

[8] Theodore the Studite, *Writings on Iconoclasm*, transl. Cattoi (2015), 21–2.
[9] Theodore the Studite, *Writings on Iconoclasm*, transl. Cattoi (2015), 14–24.
[10] Parry (1996), 99–100, cf. Nicephorus, *Antirrheticus* 1, PG 100: 268a.
[11] *Antirrheticus* 1.4, PG 99: 333a.
[12] Meyendorff (1987), 158–9 and (1975), 187.
[13] Meyendorff (1987), 158.

It is not secure to pick a given line from an argument of this kind as if it contained a description of a doctrine. The main iconoclast argument is simply that the divine nature is uncircumscribed while human nature is at least somehow circumscribed. Both natures are kept together in the hypostatic union. So if someone pretends that he can make a true image of Christ, he must claim that this image is able to delineate truly what Christ is: God and man, but this is impossible to achieve. Anyone that still tries to produce images is producing an idolatrous thing because it is not true to the subject, and is therefore banned by the prohibitions from the Old Testament. The painter tries, that is, to give form to what has no form and therefore he obscures and distorts Christ. Such would be the teaching of the iconoclast.

I believe there is no reason to think that the iconoclasts in general were not genuine followers of Christological orthodoxy. That said, the finer details of this Christology might still be confusing, and it is not certain that the thinkers of the iconoclast era are on a par with the Christological sophistication of theologians of former centuries. The overarching confession of two natures or essences unified in one hypostasis, without separation, division, change, or confusion, in a Christ who comprises two natural activities and wills, having body, soul, and mind, would not necessarily acknowledge a Saviour whose ontological description is clear in all details. The exact sense of what it means that an uncircumscribed nature is united hypostatically with another circumscribed nature could still nurture discussions.

THEODORE'S CHRISTOLOGY

The main Christological concern for St Theodore is to avoid accusations of confusing or separating the natures of Christ while arguing that the incarnate Son of God may be the subject of painting. In the opening paragraphs of the first refutation Theodore brings his argument from basic theological challenges to intricate problems of confusion and separation in Christology.[14] He presents an initial iconoclast claim that the veneration of icons brings the veneration of idols (*εἰδωλικὴ προσκύνησις*) into the church.[15] The reason stated by the iconoclast is

[14] *Antirrheticus* 1.1–4, PG 99: 329b–333b.
[15] *Antirrheticus* 1.2, PG 99: 329b–c.

that God should be conceived of apophatically: the divinity is *incomprehensible* and *uncircumscribable* (ἀπερίληπτον and ἀπερίγραπτον). In short such a God cannot be painted and images would be banned by the Old Testament prohibitions against images.

Theodore accepts, of course, the apophatic point, and adds that God is infinite, limitless, formless, and whatever may state 'abstractively' (διὰ τῆς ἀφαιρέσεως) that God is not.[16] He denies all circumscription and comprehension of the Godhead and objects to all charges of idolatry. However, since he endorses icons of Christ, how can he object to the charge of idolatry? The answer is that an icon is neither claimed nor conceived to be an image of God in His transcendent characteristics. When it comes to the transcendent divinity we know neither 'that it ever is' nor 'what it is' since it alone knows about itself (ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὅτι ποτὲ ἴσμεν τὸ θεῖον, ἢ ὅ τί πέρ ἐστιν, ὡς αὐτὸ περὶ ἑαυτοῦ ἐπίσταται μόνον). It is a common apophatic point that we do not know *what* the divinity is. It is more mysterious, however, what Theodore has in mind when he says that we don't know *that it ever is*. It is, of course, out of the question that he should doubt the very existence of God. What he has in mind is probably a rather radical apophatic idea that none of our categories or conceptions may be applied to God, and that God even transcends being.[17] We may suppose that what Theodore denies is the possibility of achieving knowledge both of what God is and of the ontological conditions under which he is.

The first iconoclast application of the concept of uncircumscription concerns the nature of the transcendent deity, but according to Theodore the icon is never intended to be an image of this. He therefore turns to the divine Economy. However, in his initial formulation of the doctrine of the Incarnation he makes use of a terminology that could be conceived of as rather daring. In the Incarnation there takes place a *mixture* (μίξις) of the immiscible, a *blending* (κρᾶσις) of what cannot be blended, viz. 'of the uncircumscribable with the circumscribed, of the infinite with the finite, of the boundless with the bounded, and of the formless with the well-formed, which is paradoxical' (τοῦ ἀπεριγράπτου πρὸς τὸ περιγεγραμμένον· τοῦ ἀπείρου πρὸς τὸ πεπερασμένον· τοῦ ἀορίστου πρὸς τὸ διωρισμένον· τοῦ ἀσχηματίστου

[16] *Antirrheticus* I.2, PG 99: 329c–332a.

[17] A similar point is made by St Maximus the Confessor in *Ambiguum* 7, PG 91: 1081b.

πρὸς τὸ εὐσχηματισμένον· ὃ καὶ παράδοξον).[18] The terminology of blending had been used in Christology already in the fourth century and we find it in St Gregory of Nyssa.[19] We may suppose that Gregory was aware of the nuances in the vocabulary of different kinds of mixture and blending since this had been an issue in the philosophical schools.[20] There is probably no major problem with the use of such terms, since both of them denote that two substances are mingled together but their particles are still juxtaposed. On the other hand, *confusion* (σύγχυσις) is a mingling in which the original qualities are changed or even perish with the result that some new or third thing comes into being. It is still, however, a little surprising that a theologian of the ninth century uses this kind of terminology. We should rather have expected him to apply the four famous adverbs from the Definition of the council of Chalcedon, the 'without confusion, without change, without division, without separation' (ἀσυγχύτως, ἀτρέπτως, ἀδιαιρέτως, ἀχωρίστως).[21] Does Theodore use the unfamiliar terminology of mixing and blending—with which he himself probably is familiar—in order to prepare for the iconoclast objection soon to be introduced? By using a seemingly daring terminology Theodore has prepared the ground for his iconoclast opponent to present the main Christological objection, viz. the accusation of mixing or confusing the natures, or, alternatively of separating them.[22]

The iconoclast objection presented by Theodore, however, looks quite strange at first reading:

But, the heretics say, the Godhead does not remain uncircumscribed when Christ is circumscribed bodily. If divinity is united to the flesh by a hypostatic union, the uncircumscribable divinity must be co-circumscribed in the circumscription of the flesh. Neither can be separated from the other, or else some abominable kind of division would be introduced.[23]

Ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀπερίγραπτόν φασι μένειν τὸ Θεῖον ἐν τῷ τὸν Χριστὸν περιγεγράφθαι σωματικῶς. Τῆς γὰρ θεότητος ἑνωθείσης τῇ σαρκὶ καθ' ὑποστατικὴν ἕνωσιν, ἀνάγκη συμπεριγράφεσθαι ἐν τῇ τῆς σαρκὸς περιγραφῇ τὴν ἀπερίγραπτον θεότητα· οὐ γὰρ ἐνδέχεται θάτερον

[18] *Antirrheticus* 1.2, PG 99: 329c–332a.
[19] See Tollefsen (2012), 131–42.
[20] Cf. Sorabji (2004, vol. 2), 290–315.
[21] Cf. Tanner, ed. (1990), vol. 1, 86.
[22] *Antirrheticus* 1.3–4, PG 99: 332b–333c.
[23] *Antirrheticus* 1.3, PG 99: 332b (Roth's translation).

θατέρου χωρίζεσθαι· ἵνα μὴ ἐν τούτῳ ὁ τῆς ἀπευκτῆς διαιρέσεως ἐπεισαχθείη τρόπος.

It is clear that this argument refers to the alternative heretical positions mentioned above, viz. confusion or separation, but the presentation of the argument is not clear. It expresses obviously enough not an iconoclast opinion, but must rather be construed as the 'classic' iconoclast accusation against the iconophiles. In that case it is an example of a 'shorthand' presentation that we must interpret. I suggest it shall be read thus: 'The iconophiles claim that one may paint an icon of the incarnate God. If that is so, they must further claim that the invisible Godhead is seen in the incarnate Lord, but this implies that the uncircumscribed divinity is circumscribed in accordance with the flesh, since according to the principle of the hypostatic union there can be no separation of the natures. Consequently, the iconophile position implies the heretical view that the Godhead as such is bodily circumscribed if it is to be seen. But this amounts to a kind of *confusion* of the natures that in fact implies a *change* from one kind of being into another kind of being and turns the incarnate God into an Arian-like Christ. [The "Chalcedonian logic" seems here to be applied to accuse the iconophiles of being Arians.] If the iconophile wants to avoid this, the strategy is open to *divide* the natures and claim that one only paints the humanity of Christ, which would likewise be heretical.'

If this is the way the argument should be understood, such an objection is obviously a major challenge. Theodore's answer has several steps and is not brought to a satisfactory conclusion in his first refutation. However, he immediately addresses the issue.[24] He, of course, neither accepts confusion nor division. The orthodox view might look paradoxical as it needs to accommodate the opposite properties of divinity and humanity into one and the same hypostasis existing in the world of time and place. Theodore's first answer, packaged in Byzantine rhetoric, could be unpacked in the following way: if the Godhead was circumscribed as such, it could neither remain incomprehensible in being comprehended, nor invisible in being seen, nor intangible in being touched, not impassible in suffering, nor immortal in dying. However, Christology has to reckon with the facts of the evangelical history: the Godhead *was* actually wrapped in swaddling clothes, it *was* seen, and it *was* touched, it *was* crucified, and it *was* put to

[24] *Antirrheticus* I.3, PG 99: 332b–c.

death—to deny any of this would be to deny the witness of the Scriptures, and Theodore argues: 'In the same manner therefore, you should know that it [the Godhead] also had remained uncircumscribed in being circumscribed.' In short, there is no circumscription of the uncircumscribed divinity as such in the hypostatic union. It is difficult to believe that Theodore's answer would not be acceptable for an iconoclast opponent.

Theodore clearly states that there is an aspect of the Son of God that is uncircumscribed even in the incarnate condition, viz. the Godhead as such. There is no confusion of natures as a *tertium quid* that reduces the divinity into something changed into a creature. However, Theodore also shows that one cannot just be satisfied with this notion of uncircumscribability. The Scriptures witness to a series of concrete acts of salvation history. He who was perceived executing these acts was both God and man, uncircumscribed and circumscribed. As a matter of (paradoxical) fact, God was seen, was touched, etc. If this is denied then the whole Christological vision of mainstream Christology is blurred. The ingenious Cyrillian idea accepted at the council of Ephesus (431) that Mary is Theotokos claims that the eternal Logos, the Son of God, is the sole subject of the God–man. Even if one should admit that the iconoclast is correct concerning the unlimited and unformed character of divinity, one must acknowledge the evangelical history of Christ's humanity. Before we encounter the problem of painting, we encounter the mystery of the Economy as such. It is necessary to acknowledge two sets of properties in the same subject: if Christ lacks the one set He is not God, if he lacks the other He is not a human being. Neither set can be transformed into the other in the Incarnation. Both parties have, somehow, to accept some kind of circumscription. Theodore sees this clearly. But even so the question remains whether it is possible to give an adequate description of the incarnate condition that allows for the painting of icons.

Theodore teaches the unknowability and uncircumscribability of the divine nature as such. He further denies division and confusion of the natures in Christ and he claims that one may paint a genuine icon of Christ who is both God and man. To the iconoclast this has the obvious corollary that the iconophiles need to make a *separation* of the natures of Christ and to hold that it is only Christ *qua* human that is painted. If this is the case, the humanity of Christ is turned into the being of a *mere man* (ψιλὸς ἄνθρωπος). However, to claim that Christ is a mere man is considered by both parties to be heretical and we need to clarify exactly why this is so.

We may start with an argument Theodore constructs on behalf of the iconoclast:

According to the heretics, to call Christ a mere man is totally absurd. 'Circumscription', they say, 'is characteristic of a mere man: therefore Christ is not a mere man, because he is not circumscribed.'[25]

Ψιλὸν ἄνθρωπον, φασὶ, τὸν Χριστὸν λέγεσθαι, τῶν ἀτοπωτάτων· ψιλοῦ δὲ ἐστι τὸ περιγεγράφθαι· οὔκουν ψιλὸς ὁ Χριστὸς, ὅτι μηδὲ περιγέγραπται.

As we saw in Chapter 1, this argument may be interpreted in two ways, but the most obvious way to take it is the following:[26]

A mere man is circumscribed.
Christ is not circumscribed.
Christ is not a mere man.

Theodore seems to suggest an iconoclast objection of the following kind: 'If the iconophile claims that it is possible to paint Christ, then Christ must be another human particular, for how could He otherwise be painted? Either the iconophile has to admit that Christ is a mere man and be convicted of the Nestorian heresy, or else he should accept the orthodox view that Christ is not a mere man and abandon the icon, since the one hypostasis of Christ is uncircumscribed in its Godhead.' Both parties could admit the truth of the two statements 'A mere man is circumscribed' and 'Christ is not a mere man'. The statement 'Christ is not circumscribed' is also acceptable to both but with certain qualifications. The statement is both true and not true, though not in the same respect. Theodore states that even if Christ 'accepts the circumscription natural to His body' the Godhead remained uncircumscribable in being circumscribed in the Incarnation.[27]

Theodore agrees that Christ is not a mere man.[28] He argues that it is not orthodox to claim that Christ assumed one man among men (*τῶν τινα ἀνθρώπων*). Rather He assumed the *καθ' ὅλου, ἤτοι τὴν ὅλην φύσιν*, i.e. 'the universal, that is the whole [human] nature'. This claim is perfectly orthodox and acceptable both for Theodore and his

[25] *Antirrheticus* 1.4, PG 99: 332d (Roth's translation).
[26] Cf. Chapter 1, section 'Argument'.
[27] *Antirrheticus* 1.2 and 3, PG 99: 329c–332c.
[28] *Antirrheticus* 1.4, PG 99: 332d–333c.

iconoclast opponent. We shall have to ask, however, what it means and particularly how it should be treated in a defence of the icon. Does it not seem at first to make the situation still worse?

First we should have to clarify the concepts of 'mere man' and 'universal or whole human nature'. The precise meaning of 'mere man' in the present context is to be sought in the Christological controversies in the wake of the council of Chalcedon, precisely in the Neo-Chalcedonian theology of Leontius of Jerusalem in the first half of the sixth century.[29] A mere man is a singular human being with a hypostasis of his own. He is an entity in his own right, the subject of his own actions.[30] In his case human nature exists as the nature of a particular man, i.e. in an individualized condition, and not as some universal. The Logos, however, did not assume a mere man, for instance the man Jesus of Nazareth, because if He did, He would not be *one* hypostasis but would comprise both a divine and a human hypostasis in a way that would be branded as Nestorianism. No nature can be without hypostasis, but it is not necessary for it to have an hypostasis of its own kind (be ἰδιοϋπόστατον).[31] What the Logos assumed was human nature and this human nature came to have the Logos Himself as its hypostasis. The nature is therefore *enhypostasized* in another hypostasis. Even if this is accepted as orthodox doctrine, is it not a rather strange claim? How could a nature exist in the hypostasis of another nature? There is an illustration of this principle in Leontius of Jerusalem:

> This is clearly demonstrated in the red-hot iron. While the lump of iron already exists in its own hypostasis, when it is put into the fire, the nature of the fire springs up in the hypostasis of the iron, never at any time existing in its own hypostasis, but in the hypostasis of the iron. Then, when the iron is brought out of the furnace, the fire possesses even outside the furnace the hypostasis of the iron in its own true form; and yet the fire in the furnace is undiminished.[32]

Intuitively this may make sense even if one could question whether the fire in the iron is a distinct nature or an activity. However, the claim that a nature may exist in an hypostasis of another kind is an axiom of

[29] Cf. Gray (1979), 122–41 and Grillmeier with Hainthaler (1995), vol. 2, part 2, 276–312.

[30] Gray (1979), 126–7.

[31] Gray (1979), 129.

[32] Leontius of Jerusalem, *Adversus nestorianos*, PG 86.1: 1553a.

Christological ontology and we shall here leave it at that. Gray fills in the picture a bit more:

> Everything has a nature (or essence)—everything, that is, has some formal definition of its whatness. But the nature of a thing can be defined without any reference to concrete existence; a 'nature' by itself is an abstraction. If one is to speak of things as they actually exist *in concreto*, one must introduce the idea of hypostasis, that is, of the individual concrete entity in which every nature is found.[33]

Gray's point is that when the Logos assumed human nature He assumed it as His own particular humanity.[34] It is probably distinctions like these Theodore wants to express when he, like Leontius of Jerusalem, denies that Christ is a mere man, and claims that He assumed the universal or whole human nature. This nature, Theodore says, was *contemplated in an individual manner* (ἐν ἀτόμῳ θεωρουμένην).[35] However, the term *contemplated* is ambiguous. In a theological or philosophical text it would normally be expected to mean that something is theoretically grasped or grasped in the abstract. In that case we have no guarantee that it exists *in concreto* in the sensible world. It could even be a phantasm. But that cannot be the meaning here. Theodore explicitly denies that Christ was perceived as if He were an individual in appearance and imagination. Rather He was seen, touched, and circumscribed; He was eating and drinking, maturing and growing, working and resting, sleeping and waking, hungering and thirsting, weeping and sweating, etc.[36] Of course, universal natures do not do such things.

We commented on Theodore's doctrine of the universal in Chapter 1. He says universals exist in individuals like humanity in Peter and Paul.[37] When it comes to Christ, there is no humanity if it does not subsist 'as in a someone' (ὡς ἐν τινί) in Him. Therefore Christ both subsists (ὑφεστῶσα) and is contemplated as an individual human being. Maybe we could interpret this in the sense that universal or essential humanity is made concrete and individualized as the distinctive human form (μορφή) of the divine hypostasis of the Logos.

On this background Theodore may claim that the evangelical challenge is met as well: Christ appears in all things as a man doing His Father's works, which witness to the invisible presence of God for eyes

[33] Gray (1979), 129. [34] Gray (1979), 135.
[35] *Antirrheticus* 1.4, PG 99: 332d–333a. [36] *Antirrheticus* 1.4, PG 99: 333a.
[37] Cf. *Antirrheticus* 3 Alpha 15, PG 99: 396c–397a.

that are able to see. To be contemplated as an individual must be taken in the sense of being *perceived* as such.

We shall now turn to the third *Antirrheticus* in order to fill in the picture Theodore makes of the incarnate Son of God a bit more. What has been said in the first refutation will not suffice to defeat the iconoclast objections. He still lacks a proper and convincing teaching on the concreteness of Christ that is such that one may conceive of it as a condition allowing the painting of images.

In the third refutation, as we have seen in Chapter 1, Theodore announces the application of 'Aristotelian' arguments. The third *Antirrheticus* is a treatise of its own, divided into four parts. It is mainly the first part, 'On the making of an icon of Christ in the body' (*περὶ τῆς ἐν σώματι εἰκονογραφίας τοῦ Χριστοῦ*) (section Alpha), that is relevant in this connection. Theodore opens with a presentation of what he calls *common notions*.[38] The following one is important in this connection: 'Every three-dimensional body having resistance, being coloured and touchable, is circumscribed' (*πᾶν σῶμα τριχῆ διαστατὸν, ἔχον ἀντιτυπίαν, χροιᾷ τε καὶ ἁφῇ ὑποπίπτον, περιγραπτόν*). It is necessary to be a body of this kind in order to receive some further predicates. It is necessary to be a body of this kind in order that a history may occur in time and place. Theodore remarks that the written record (*λογογραφία*) terminates in *ἱστορία*. The term *historia* may mean several things (cf. Liddell and Scott), like inquiry, scientific observation, a body of recorded cases, a narrative, an account. It seems rather obvious what is intended here, viz. the narrative of the *events* of Christ's life and works which are written down (as *λογογραφία*) in the Gospel stories. These are the primary data for theological considerations.

A body, according to Theodore, is something that has layers of properties, like three-dimensionality, resistance, *χροιά*—which means appearance to the eye, coloured surface, and being subject to touch. This makes it tempting to quote 1 John 1:1 as an epitome of the experience attained by the witnesses of the Gospel histories: 'That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched — this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.' If one removes the events concerning Christ one removes the written narrative as well: take away the events experienced by the contemporaries of Christ and there will be nothing to base the record on.[39] The point is obvious, viz.

[38] *Antirrheticus* 3, Alpha 1, PG 99: 389c.
[39] Cf. *Antirrheticus* 3 Alpha 2, PG 99: 392a.

to stress that the act of revelation is an observable event that comes first (an act of God). Spoken and written words or records come next.

Christ was manifested in a body that could be touched and seen by His contemporaries. Even so, Christ has two essences or natures that are basically acknowledged in two properties (ἐκ δυοῖν ἄρα ἰδιωμάτων): circumscribability and uncircumscribability.[40] It is important to remember here that these are properties and not essences. Neither is it the essence of the Godhead to be uncircumscribed nor is it the essence of humanity to be circumscribed. Further properties like being tangible and having three dimensions are reckoned under circumscribability, and the properties of being bodiless and formless are reckoned under uncircumscribability.[41] Up to this point there is only talk of the union of *natures* and that there is one subject, Christ, who possesses these natures with the additional properties mentioned above. Theodore sees a problem here, viz. would not the stronger nature eliminate the weaker in this particular union of natures?[42] This strikes me as a rather serious problem: does it not turn up naturally as an ontological concern? Would not common sense tell us that the overwhelming power of divinity consumes created being when in contact with it? One should probably answer with the claim that God's power is not only consuming but preserving as well. Theodore does not enter into any further considerations, but simply objects that the view is heretical, since if Christ lacks circumscription, three-dimensionality, a firm surface, and tangibility, He could not suffer physically, implying thereby that Christ's physical sufferings are basic to the Economy.[43] The argument has already been formalized as an example (see Chapter 1), and it runs like this:

If Christ is not circumscribed, then He cannot suffer.
He is able to suffer.
He is circumscribed.

The truth of the argument rests on the condition that the form is valid and the premises are true and therefore that the concept of circumscribability implies properties like three-dimensionality, firm surface, and tangibility, and that this again implies the ability to suffer. The second premise should be accepted on the witness of the Scriptures.

[40] *Antirrheticus* 3 Alpha 3, PG 99: 392b.
[41] *Antirrheticus* 3 Alpha 4, PG 99: 392b–c.
[42] *Antirrheticus* 3 Alpha 5, PG 99: 392c.
[43] *Antirrheticus* 3, Alpha 6, PG 99: 392d.

The argument is obviously valid since it basically has the valid form of *modus tollens*: if p then q, ~q, ~p.[44] This means that since the form is valid and the premises are true the argument has a true conclusion.

There is one more aspect of Theodore's Christology that we should address, viz. how he conceives of the exchange of properties between the natures within the hypostatic union. He presents an orthodox interpretation of a Christological key text much discussed in the fourth century, viz. Proverbs 8:22 and 25: 'The Lord created me as the beginning of his ways, for the sake of his works… before the mountains were established and before the hills, he begets me.' According to Theodore, the first verse refers to Christ's humanity, the second to his divinity.[45] Theodore concludes that insofar as Christ is created, He is circumscribed, insofar as He is uncreated ('begotten'), He is uncircumscribed. These two basic properties shall not be conceived of as effecting a change in the opposite so that what is circumscribed becomes uncircumscribed or what is uncircumscribed becomes circumscribed. The adverb 'without change' (ἀτρέπτως) from the Definition of the council of Chalcedon forbids that. It is probably easy to misunderstand what the present issue is about. It is not now talk of natures changing into other natures, but of natures *exchanging* properties with other natures in such a way that each nature receives what the other nature has. Theodore says that the one nature cannot exchange its own property (τὸ οἰκεῖον) for that of another and lose the property that belongs to it in a natural and incommunicable way (τὸ προσὸν αὐτῇ φυσικὸν καὶ ἀκοινώνητον ἰδίωμα). So there is no change of one thing into another, and there is no exchange that implies losing what one gives away. If that is the case, how then should we think of the two natures of Christ with their basic properties? Is an alternative to think of them as completely kept in separation from one another within their own limits, so that they never get in touch with one another? This would be in conflict with the Chalcedonian claim that the natures should be kept in the hypostatic union as 'without division, without separation' (ἀδιαιρέτως, ἀχωρίστως). With these considerations we are brought to the doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum*, which is one of the remaining challenges that should be discussed before Theodore may reach a satisfactory definition of the subject of painting.

[44] On this, see Chapter 1, section 'Argument'.
[45] *Antirrheticus* 3 Alpha 7, PG 99: 392d–393a.

COMMUNICATIO IDIOMATUM

The doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum*, or περιχώρησις, states that the properties of the two natures of Christ, even if distinct, *interchange*, so that the divine nature may achieve human properties and the human may assume divine properties. This interchange takes place in the hypostasis, and is basically to be understood as the penetration of the natural activities of the natures into one another. As Maximus the Confessor says, the humanity becomes deified and the deity becomes humanized.[46] This implies, however, that divine activity both acts through and transforms humanity and this idea may, as we shall see, create problems for the iconophiles.

How may it create problems? In Christian tradition one may find some rather daring ideas that could be appealed to by the iconoclasts. St Gregory of Nyssa, in his *Contra Eunomium* (book 3.3), is a striking example. Gregory comments on what St Peter says in Acts 2:36: 'God hath made that same Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ.' Gregory argues against Eunomius' interpretation, which states that this is said of the divine Logos.[47] Gregory claims it is said of the man Jesus. According to Gregory, the assumed nature, when mixed with the divine, became what the assuming nature was.[48] Such a theology could probably suit Theodore's iconoclast opponent. Gregory states that the humanity of Christ was exalted by becoming Lord and Christ, and this was fulfilled after the Passion. Some quotations from Gregory may bring this into relief:

> This [lowly human nature], by mixture (ἀνακράσεως) with the infinite and boundless character of the good, remained no longer in its own measures and properties, but was raised up to the Right Hand of God together with Itself, and became Lord instead of servant, Christ the King instead of subject, Highest instead of lowly, God instead of man.[49]
>
> … the Logos is identical with the Logos, he who appeared in the flesh with him who was with God. But the flesh was not identical with the Godhead before it was transformed (μεταποιηθῆναι) and made

[46] Cf. *Ambiguum* 7, PG 91: 1084c–d.

[47] Eunomius (*c*.335–*c*.394) was one of the main exponents of so-called 'Neo-Arian' theology in the fourth century. He denied that Christ was consubstantial with the Father. The 'Neo-Arians' were opposed by the Cappadocian fathers.

[48] *Contra Eunomium*, GNO 2, 119.

[49] *Contra Eunomium*, GNO 2, 124.

> identical with the Godhead, so that one [thing] necessarily befits God the Logos, and another the form of the servant.[50]
>
> … but when mixed (ἀνακραθεῖσα) with the divine it no longer remains in its own limits and properties, but is taken up to that which is overwhelming and transcendent, the contemplation of the properties of the flesh and the Godhead remains unconfused (ἀσύγχυτος), so long as each of these is contemplated in itself.[51]

There are several challenges here.[52] It is, however, important to note that according to Gregory, the exaltation of the humanity of Christ was fulfilled *after the Passion*. This, obviously, must be the key to understanding these passages. They do not state that Christ's humanity became infinite and boundless while still in the world of time and place. The transformation and the transcending of human limits and properties were fulfilled when Christ fulfilled His course in this world. However, if one overlooks this restriction, one might take Gregory's words as a confirmation of a position claiming that the Incarnation itself included a transformation of humanity into uncircumscribability even in this world. There is, however, no reason to believe that Gregory would have endorsed this. On the other hand, does Gregory teach that Christ's humanity in its final transformation lost what Theodore, as we saw above, called *incommunicable properties*? The answer is negative; he does not teach this, since we can observe that the properties are unconfused as long as they are *contemplated* in themselves. This defence might seem somehow weak, but we might take Gregory upon his word and suppose that Theodore would have found no fault with him because of the above sayings.

There is, however, a problem lurking here. If there occurs a final transformation of Christ's humanity, does not this mean that it achieved uncircumscription in this final state? If it has received uncircumscription, is it possible to make an image of it? First and foremost one has to decide what is painted in an icon of Christ. Is it an entity in a historical or in a trans-historical condition? Is it Christ in His life on earth or in His glorified state? It is probably easy to answer this question with regard to the so-called festal icons, since they represent an historical

[50] *Contra Eunomium*, GNO 2, 130. [51] *Contra Eunomium*, GNO 2, 130.

[52] Some of these challenges concern the interpretation of Gregory's Christology and are outside of the scope of the present book, but cf. Tollefsen (2012).

event.[53] But what do we think about icons representing the Saviour as a sole figure? It is reasonable to claim that such an icon usually represents the glorified Lord. However, if that is the case, how should one cope with the uncircumscribed condition of the glorified Lord when, according to Gregory, His humanity no longer remains within its own limits and properties—if Theodore would accept Gregory's doctrine, which he probably would? We shall return to this challenge below.

Theodore's immediate concern is with the ontological condition of the incarnate Christ as existing in time and place, i.e. as a historical being in the world. Theodore says that if one removes the circumscription of Christ, one removes His humanity as well.[54] Every image is an image of the μορφή, the σχῆμα, or the εἶδος, and of colour: these signify the body that is therefore circumscribed.[55] The connection that is made here between form and colour is interesting. Theodore seems to think that for something to be a body, a primary concomitant is for it to appear in a coloured form.[56] Colour is, of course, vital when it comes to the painting of an icon. It is a bodily being appearing in a coloured form that is painted.

In the rest of the first chapter (Alpha) of *Antirrheticus* 3, he develops his ontology further with a view to define what it means to be a particular being.[57] This is crucial, of course, since something needs to be a particular in order to be portrayed.[58] Universals (τὰ καθόλου), Theodore states, 'are seen' (ὁρᾶται) with mind and thought (νοῦς καὶ διάνοια), while particulars (τὰ καθ' ἕκαστα) are seen with the eyes, which look at sensible things (τὰ αἰσθητά).[59] Particulars are delimited by certain properties, described by Theodore as kinds of circumscription. The list is presented together with Theodore's examples in Chapter 1.[60]

[53] However, this 'historical' event is also somehow transformed in the icon. It is in a way simplified and spiritualized, and elevated into the realm of theological meaning.

[54] *Antirrheticus* 3 Alpha 10, PG 99: 393c.

[55] *Antirrheticus* 3 Alpha 11, PG 99: 393d. Have these three terms different senses? The σχῆμα would probably answer to some external posture of the body. Cf. the acts of Nicaea II, Mansii xiii, 244b, translated in Sahas (1988), 77: 'The icon resembles the prototype, not with regard to the essence, but only with regard to the name and to *the position of the members* which can be characterized.' The italics are mine. We return to the εἶδος in the last part of this chapter.

[56] See the interesting reflections on the relation between colour and form in James (1996), ch. 7. Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 7.4, 1029b16–18: it belongs to a surface to be bright in virtue of itself.

[57] *Antirrheticus* 3 Alpha 15–58, PG 99: 396c–416d.

[58] That is if by 'portrayed' we mean being represented figuratively in an image.

[59] *Antirrheticus* 3 Alpha 16, PG 99: 397a–c.

[60] *Antirrheticus* 3 Alpha 13, PG 99: 396a–b.

In Theodore's list of circumscriptions we find terms like *κατάληψις*, which has the philosophical sense of 'being grasped with the mind'. However, Theodore's example is Christ who is uncontainable as contained in His Mother's womb.[61] What is intended, therefore, is inclusion in the physical sense. Quantity and quality are Aristotelian categories, and so are *θέσις* (posture), place, and time as well. One can state of Christ that the one who was without quantity acquired definite measures. The one who was without quality became qualified, for instance achieving a coloured surface. The one without posture stood, sat, and lay down. Further, the one outside of place was placed in a crib. The one beyond time became twelve years old. The one without figure was seen in human shape. The one without body became bodily.

Theodore distinguishes between three kinds of quantities, viz. line (i.e. length without width), figure (i.e. a configuration of at least three lines), and body. [62] Body should here be understood as a configuration of definite measures. He says it is 'formed from different figures' (*ἐκ διαφόρων σχημάτων μορφούμενον*) and is bounded by a place. He substantiates his argument with Scriptural examples: Christ was found in a figure (*σχῆμα*) as a man (cf. Phil 2:7), He was circumscribed by place, living in Nazareth (Matt 2:23), and He became flesh (John 1:14). Consequently, His total being in the world was circumscribed.

As we have seen above, Theodore argues strongly that a nature cannot be subject to a change in which it loses integral properties like (at least some of) those commented on just now, but he does not deny explicitly or in principle the possibility that a nature may assume into itself the property of another being if no confusion occurs. However, to receive the property of another nature definitely makes a change, and would not such a change affect the original properties of the receiving nature? How exactly does Theodore understand the principle of exchange or communion of properties (*communicatio idiomatum*)?[63] So far his argument has tried to establish a line of demarcation between divine and human properties in

[61] This paradoxical theme of the containing of the uncontainable was popular in Marian homilies. Cf. the sermons translated by Cunningham (*Wider than Heaven*, 2008), 176 (John of Euboea), and 214 and 219 (Andrew of Crete).

[62] *Antirrheticus* 3 Alpha 30, PG 99: 404b–c.

[63] According to Parry (1996), 106, Theodore 'gives here no hint of a possible communication of idioms'. But does that mean that he denies it? I do not think so. Parry says that 'there is, nevertheless, a communication of properties in the hypostasis of Christ'. It does not become clear, however, how Parry understands this precisely (cf. pp. 106–9).

order to avoid any transference of naturally circumscribed properties into the mode of uncircumscribability and *vice versa*. This is, of course, done in order to construct an argument for the possibility of painting an icon of the incarnate God, but the problem is that this effort to avoid the accusation of confusing the natures is exposed to the opposite accusation of dividing them.

There are a couple of things to consider here. On the one hand, we should remember St Gregory of Nyssa's words (quoted above) that Christ's human nature in the glorified condition after the resurrection no longer remains 'in its own measures and properties'. We should also keep in mind that even in this condition Gregory admits that Christ's humanity is conceptually distinguished from His divinity. In this case, despite the communication of properties, in which the stronger has the upper hand, the weaker nature may still be conceived. However, one wonders how this 'conception' should be understood. There does not seem to be much left for sensible appearance. Of course, this is a rather daring doctrine, but we cannot expect Gregory to take into account distinctions that were developed and deemed significant in the Christological controversies after his own time. What Gregory says concerns the Lord in Glory, not as a historical being in time and place, but still this creates a problem, especially if the icon of Christ depicts the risen and glorified Lord. How could this be possible against such a theological background? Theodore's attempt to keep the properties of the two natures apart may seem to rescue the distinctive marks of concrete humanity, maybe even in the beyond, but at what cost?

St Maximus the Confessor developed a rather sophisticated doctrine of communion of properties. If we turn to the *Ambiguum* 5 we find there a topic that could seem to create additional problems for Theodore. Maximus quotes Dionysius' words about Christ:[64] 'And He performs human activities in a way beyond the human.' Human activity (ἐνέργεια), Maximus says, is assimilated to the divine power without being changed, 'since the [human] nature, united without confusion (ἀσυγχύτως) to the divine [nature], is completely interpenetrated, and in no way annulled, nor separated from the Godhead hypostatically united with it'.[65] Maximus adheres strictly to the 'Chalcedonian logic' of the four famous adverbs: without confusion, without change, without division, and without separation.[66] But what does that imply?

[64] *Ambiguum* 5, CCSG 48, 23.
[65] *Ambiguum* 5, CCSG 48, 26–7.
[66] Cf. Tollefsen (2008), 200–14.

Maximus' strict logic suggests a unification that it may be tempting to describe metaphorically as spilling oil on water.[67] The two substances never become confused, but they do not seem to be properly united either. However, this metaphor will not do. There is another metaphor, used by Maximus himself, that is more striking, viz. that of the red hot sword.[68] In that case the one property (or activity) wholly penetrates the other and the entity could reasonably be held to be one thing, but still with a dual character (of nature) that is neither confused nor divided. The sight of a piece of iron in the furnace is the perception of one single thing that glows almost transparent with a white-red hue. Christ, Maximus says, did not execute divine things divinely, since His divine activities cannot be separated from the flesh.[69] His example is Christ walking on water.[70] Walking is a typical human activity, but Christ executes it in unity with the divine power that acts in such a way that water functions in the mode of being unyielding. To sum up: Maximus teaches that the divine penetrates the human and that the human penetrates the divine without diminishing the presence of the natural properties of the original essences.

The Godhead and its activities are as such invisible, and the Godhead acts secretly in Christ so that new modes of being are demonstrated as the result of His activities. Human activities are executed in a divine mode and divine activities are executed in a human mode. Theodore would probably admit all of this. Even if he does not say much about it, we have at least an indication of what he thinks in the second *Antirrheticus*.[71] He argues that the risen Christ has not lost the properties of His human nature. This, of course, is very important. However, we must ask what this means concretely, and whether the humanity of Christ does not suffer any transformation or glorification at all. It would definitely be of the greatest importance for Theodore not to contradict such important thinkers as Gregory and Maximus.

As just stated, Theodore claims that the risen Lord did not lose His human properties. The iconoclast, however, objects that since Christ was able to appear to the apostles through closed doors, He did not retain the properties of His body the same way as ordinary human beings have them. Rather He had them without solidity (παχύτης, thickness, stoutness) and circumscription. The iconophile objects that

[67] Cf. Tollefsen (2017) on Maximus' doctrine of deification.
[68] *Ambiguum* 5, CCSG 48, 33, cf. *Ambiguum* 7, PG 91: 1073d–1076a.
[69] *Ambiguum* 5, CCSG 48, 29.
[70] *Ambiguum* 5, CCSG 48, 23.
[71] *Antirrheticus* 2.43–6, PG 99: 381d–385b.

Christ was at least seen, but the iconoclast answers that the reason for this was that the apostles saw Him with purified eyes—whatever that should mean.[72] With this argument, however, the iconoclast, on a reasonable interpretation of the claim, is on insecure ground. He comes close to a position that could be charged with Docetism, something with which Theodore charges him on several occasions.[73] Theodore then brings up the Gospel story of Christ walking on water. It seems that both Maximus and Theodore depend on Dionysius in their interpretations of this narrative.[74] Like Maximus, Theodore thinks the water achieved a new mode of being, being held together by a supernatural power (*ὑπερφυεῖ δυνάμει*). Then follows the core of Theodore's argument. He states that Christ, by His *will*, revealed His supernatural powers before the Passion, as He revealed His human powers after the resurrection.[75] The solution, therefore, is referred to the concept of will.

We should be alert to two things here. First, Theodore's explanation may fit in with Maximus' doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum*: Christ's walking on water is Christ doing human things (walking) in a divine way (on the unstable element of water) and secondly, the appeal to the will of Christ. The question is how Theodore understands this appeal to the will. At this point the argument touches upon rather subtler issues of Christology. Theodore commits himself to the idea that Christ had complete control over His properties, essential as well as non-essential. We shall return to this shortly.

Does not this teaching come close to Julian of Halicarnassus' heresy of aphthartodocetism?[76] We cannot move into a detailed exposition of the views of Julian, the interpretation of which is a matter of controversy. The aspect in which Theodore's Christology might remind one of Julian's teaching is in connection with this reference to the will.[77] Julian allowed that Christ suffered physically, but not by natural

[72] Here one could think of the Transfiguration: the apostles saw the divine light of Christ's divinity with physical but spiritually purified eyes.

[73] As remarked above, I don't think, however, that this means that the iconoclasts were spokesmen for a particular kind of heresy called agraptodocetism. Their starting point was, I believe, traditional Christology, but in the heat of argument they stumbled upon serious problems concerning how to understand the accommodation to one another of the two sets of natural properties in the one hypostasis of Christ.

[74] Cf. Dionysius, *De divinis nominibus* 2.9.

[75] Two verbs are used for willing, cf. *Antirrheticus* 2.46, PG 99: 385a–b, viz. *θέλω* and *βούλομαι*.

[76] Grillmeier with Hainthaler (1995), 79–111.

[77] Cf. Grillmeier with Hainthaler (1995), 103.

necessity. In complete mastery of Himself, He allowed Himself to suffer from a free decision. However, this is not exactly what Theodore teaches. New modes of being may be manifested, but this does not exclude the fact that the concretely existing humanity of Christ was *naturally* exposed to suffering and death. Christ did not have to *allow* Himself to suffer ontologically as a human being. The miracles, however, are another matter. They are not 'natural', but manifest rather *new modes of being*, as they do for Maximus: Christ does human things in a divine way (for instance the walking on water) and divine things in a human way (for instance heals with a touch). On the other hand, since the purpose of the Incarnation is for God to be one of us it belongs to Christ's human nature to be exposed to suffering.

Theodore argues that in the Economy, before the resurrection, Christ had natural access to supernatural power that was at His disposal whenever He wanted.[78] He could manifest this power whenever He wished. However, even if He could have transformed His humanity into incorruptibility, this was not part of the purpose of the Economy at this stage. Therefore the (innocent) natural weaknesses of His flesh remained until His resurrection. After His resurrection He transformed His humanity in such a way that it was 'without solidity' (ἄνευ παχύτητος). This would be the new completely deified condition of Christ's humanity. However, He still had the power to show Himself 'as' (ὡς) solid, and may in that condition let Himself be exposed to touch (as in the case of the doubting Thomas) and He could even eat with the apostles.[79]

It looks as if Theodore has worked himself into a paradox when he says the bodily being of the resurrected Christ is without solidity but may still show itself with solidity. However, that is not necessarily the case. First there is one misunderstanding that we must avoid: to be a body is not to be solid. Solidity is just one of several properties of a sensible body. Nor is being without solidity the same as being uncircumscribed, since angels are without solidity, but not without circumscription. For this reason Theodore can argue that Christ is still, in His Glory, circumscribed bodily as a human being, even if He

[78] *Antirrheticus* 2.46, PG 99: 385a–b.

[79] Roth in Theodore the Studite, *On the Holy Icons* (1981), 72, translates the Greek ὡς as 'as if'. I would like to avoid that since it might create the impression of an empty docetic appearance, and I do not think the context of 2.46–7, even if the argument is rather subtle, warrants this idea. 'As' is at least a bit more concrete.

is beyond all corruptibility.[80] However, His human characteristics do not exist within the limits and boundaries that would be normal in the sensible world. (In the sensible world a body would naturally have the property of more or less solidity.) They are transformed, but 'being transformed' does not mean that all continuity is lost in principle between this glorified humanity and the natural humanity of this world. We saw above that according to Gregory of Nyssa, it must be possible to contemplate the humanity of the glorified Christ in such a way that we may still recognize its particular human features. Let us take it for granted that the glorified body of Christ is without solidity *qua* glorified: Christ could enter the room where the disciples were gathered without using the door (John 20:19). However, since His body is still a human body, its natural properties are not lost, eradicated. To be transformed is to exist in a new mode, and this mode may seem to suspend certain natural activities, but divine power may let natural properties and activities be shown 'as' what they essentially are, but now definitely without corruptibility.

Theodore does not deny the principle of *communicatio idiomatum*, but he seems to conceive of it in a rather subtle way in order to accommodate his argument both to the Tradition and to the requirements for making an icon. Even if he does not come up with an explicit conclusion it seems to me that he could now have defended the painting of an icon of the glorified Lord on the premises he worked out since Christ has the power to show Himself as solid or at least as bodily—that is if the painting of images could be justified as such. The two basic properties (of the natures) shall not be conceived of as effecting mutual change in its opposite so that what is naturally circumscribed becomes essentially uncircumscribed or what is naturally uncircumscribed becomes essentially circumscribed. However, we have not yet got sufficient hold of the subject of painting.

APPEARANCE: DEFINING THE SUBJECT OF PAINTING

Where does all of this bring us? These Christological subtleties may make us lose sight of what the present issue is, viz. if it is possible to

[80] *Antirrheticus* 2.46–7, PG 99: 385a–388a.

make an icon of the incarnate God. We should not, however, be impatient at this stage because of the seriousness with which the iconoclast challenges are met. These intricate reflections concerning circumscription are not yet brought to a conclusion. The last part of this chapter will present an interesting development in the direction of defining the subject of painting.

We have seen that the presence in the world of Christ as a human being entails circumscription by a set of delimiting categories. However, we have also seen that Theodore denies that Christ is a 'mere man', but rather that He assumed universal human nature. It could be considered as rather difficult to adjust these two doctrines to one another, but Theodore tries to achieve such an adjustment since it is imperative for him to preserve what he considers as two parts of the same traditional legacy: a correct dogmatic teaching and the making of icons.

We have seen that Theodore presents an iconoclast objection in the third *Antirrheticus*, the essence of which is as follows:[81] if Christ assumed flesh in His own hypostasis, this flesh must have been without individual characteristics (*ἀχαρακτήριστον*) since it does not mean 'a someone' (*τὸν τινά*), but rather 'universal man' (*τὸν καθόλου ἄνθρωπον*). This objection must be seen as a corollary of the anti-Nestorian twist of the iconoclast position, even if it is difficult to imagine that any iconoclast could bear all the consequences of such a doctrine. That depends, of course, on how it is interpreted. If it is the case that the flesh of Christ should be conceived in such a universal manner, how could He then be tangible and seen? As we have seen above, Theodore denies that Christ just seemed to appear as an individual being. Rather, if the Gospel is to be taken seriously, He had all the characteristics of an individual being: He was seen, described, and touched. He was eating, drinking, maturing, and growing, etc. As pointed out above, humanity was manifested in Him in a concrete way. However, Theodore has not yet highlighted sufficiently how he thinks universal humanity is adjusted to the particularity of Christ. Now he says that the assumption of 'universal man' cannot mean *not* being 'a someone'. He argues that 'universals have their existence in individuals, like humanity in Peter and Paul and other of the same species' (*τὰ γὰρ καθόλου ἐν τοῖς ἀτόμοις τὴν ὕπαρξιν ἔχει· οἷον, ἡ ἀνθρωπότης ἐν Πέτρῳ καὶ Παύλῳ καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς ὁμοειδέσι*). If the particulars do not exist, then universal man is removed as well.

[81] *Antirrheticus* 3 Alpha 15, PG 99: 396c–d.

Humanity, therefore, is not in Christ if it does not exist in Him 'as in someone' (ὡς ἐν τινί).

There are two things here that are parallel to theories put forward by St Maximus the Confessor. First, in *Ambiguum* 10, Maximus says that universals exist in particulars, and if the particulars perish, the universals will no longer be.[82] Like Maximus, Theodore thinks that individuals or particulars are primary kinds of being and universals are, in Theodore's words, 'seen' (ὁρᾶται) by *mind* and *thought* (νοῦς and διάνοια). 'Nature' as such is not circumscribed. *Moving creatures* on the other hand, i.e. sensibly existing creatures, are not the species in the universal sense (οὐκ εἶδος τὸ τὸν καθόλου λόγον ἔχον), since universal species are invisible, formless, shapeless, and therefore *uncircumscribed*.[83] The uncircumscribable nature of the universal consists, probably, in its *indeterminate* character compared with the particular. The universal is not delimited to this and that individual being. The universal 'humanity', for instance, extends to the whole series of human beings, the number of entities in which is indefinitely prolonged for as long as there is human reproduction in the world. Particulars, on the other hand, are unique entities, seen with the eyes that are directed to sensible things (τὰ αἰσθητά). This is a quite common ontological and epistemological doctrine in the Peripatetic tradition, but no Neoplatonist would ever have conceded that particulars are primary beings ontologically. If Christ assumed universal human nature as such, He could only be 'touched' and 'seen' in thought. Theodore adduces the Gospel story about Thomas (John 20:24–9) in order to demonstrate how absurd such a notion would be.

Secondly, Maximus makes a distinction between 'being something' (τι) and 'being someone' (τις).[84] The 'something' denotes the universal, while the 'someone' denotes the hypostasis. It is most interesting that Theodore employs the same terminology and we shall see how he develops his concept of the hypostasis as a 'someone'. This, of course, is crucial for the iconophile argument, since Theodore must show exactly how human nature exists in a particularized way in Christ, without achieving a hypostatic status of its own. Even so, the humanity of Christ needs to achieve some kind of hypostatic presence without which there would be no real Incarnation

[82] *Ambiguum* 10, PG 91: 1189c–d.
[83] *Antirrheticus* 3 Alpha 36, PG 99: 405c–408a.
[84] *Opusculum* 10, PG 91: 137a.

and only a phantom to be painted, which would be impossible and which Theodore cannot accept.

One question should be kept in mind in connection with what follows: does Theodore succeed in defining the concept of hypostasis in such a way that it is both Christologically acceptable and iconographically useful? The term 'man', Theodore says, denotes the common human essence (*τὴν κοινὴν οὐσίαν*), but when one brings in the *τίς*, probably indicating 'some man', one denotes the hypostasis.[85] Hypostasis is then defined as 'the self-subsisting subsistence (or existence) of that which is manifest' (*τὴν ἰδιοσύστατον τοῦ δηλουμένου ὕπαρξιν*). This is further specified as 'the circumscription compounded from certain properties' (*περιγραφὴν ἐξ ἰδιωμάτων τινῶν συγκειμένην*). Consequently, a 'someone' is an entity that exists in a manifest way as a circumscribed compound of properties, like Peter or Paul. They share a common nature, but differ as hypostases, since the set of properties differs in each case.

Theodore refers to the Gospel story in which Christ says to the Jews (John 8:40): 'Now you seek to kill me, [a man] who (*ὅς*) has told you the truth.' He claims that in this present philosophical argument the pronoun *τίς* is semantically and pragmatically equivalent with the relative pronoun *ὅς*. So both the 'someone' and the 'who' means or indicates the hypostasis or person (*ὑπόστασιν ἤτοι πρόσωπον*). Christ assumed the universal human nature, but this nature is *contemplated individually* (*ἐν ἀτόμῳ θεωρουμένην*). A nature as such, on the other hand, is not a 'someone' or a 'who'. However, the term *contemplated* is used in several of the paragraphs and one wonders about its application in connections that concern sense perception. He has already made a distinction between what is perceived as something sensible and what is perceived by the mind, but even so the term 'contemplated' must here indicate an experience of concretely existing being in time and place.[86]

Theodore's next step concerns the use of names.[87] He distinguishes between *τὸ προσηγορικὸν ὄνομα* and to *τὸ κύριον ὄνομα*. According to Liddell and Scott, *τὸ προσηγορικὸν ὄνομα* is an addressing or appellative name. Here it should be taken in the sense of a common name like 'man'.

[85] *Antirrheticus* 3 Alpha 17, PG 99: 397b–c.

[86] Cf. St Gregory of Nyssa, *De hominis opificio* 6, PG 44: 140a, who says it is the mind that perceives through the senses, so that we might probably say that something is contemplated through sensation.

[87] *Antirrheticus* 3 Alpha 18, PG 99: 397c–d.

The τὸ κύριον ὄνομα is the 'authorized', real, or actual name that we here should take as the proper name, like Peter and Paul. This conceptual distinction is well known from earlier theology, *in casu* the Cappadocian fathers. The universal 'man' is a common name while the proper name belongs to 'someone' like Peter and Paul. The someone may, as a matter of fact, be called with both names, the universal and the proper. Paul is a man with regard to what he has in common with individuals of the same species (τοῖς ὁμοειδέσιν ἀτόμοις), but in so far as he differs hypostatically he is called Paul. It is likewise with Christ, who carries both a common name and a proper name: 'He differs from other humans by His hypostatic properties (τοῖς ὑποστατικοῖς ἰδιώμασιν); and for this reason He is circumscribed.' Christ is a 'someone' (τις) as called with His proper name and characterized by His hypostatic properties. Theodore uses the ὅ τίς (τὸν τινά) almost as a technical term in several paragraphs. The name Christ denotes (signifies, means) a 'someone'.[88]

The Logos is divine by nature and as such invisible and formless.[89] If He assumes human nature in His own hypostasis and for that reason becomes visible and formed and consequently circumscribed, will not this suggest, given Theodore's strong insistence on His being someone *qua* incarnate, characterized by hypostatic properties, that humanity becomes a second person (πρόσωπον) or individual in Christ? In short, does he not still expose himself to the charge of Nestorianism? He answers that this is not the case, because the hypostasis of the Logos becomes the common hypostasis of the two natures. This hypostasis is hypostasizing (ὑποστήσασαν) in itself (ἐν αὐτῇ) the human nature with (μετὰ) the properties that differentiate it from other human beings, and it is, therefore, uncircumscribable according to its divinity and circumscribable according to the concrete properties of His assumed humanity.

Like other orthodox thinkers before him, Theodore explicitly teaches that the human nature is assumed by the principle of the hypostasis of the Logos, and that there is no human hypostasis in Christ. It is the divine Logos that is the hypostasis, the subject or unifying principle in Christ. No nature can exist without hypostasis (ὡς ἂν μὴ εἴη φύσις ἀνυπόστατος) and the humanity is both contemplated and circumscribed in the hypostasis of the Logos, as in an individual

[88] *Antirrheticus* 3 Alpha 18–20, PG 99: 397c–400b.
[89] *Antirrheticus* 3 Alpha 22, PG 99: 400c.

manner. This should therefore not be taken in the sense that there is a second person in the God–man, but it rather means that the God–man Himself is contemplated as an individual man.[90]

All this indicates that, according to Theodore's view, the hypostasis is defined as the totality of individualizing properties in an essential subject. In this regard he seems to be following in the footsteps of St Basil the Great and St Gregory of Nyssa. They may both talk of an hypostasis as an 'essence with properties' (*οὐσία μετὰ ἰδιωμάτων*).[91] Something similar is found in St Maximus. He says in *Opusculum* 26 that the philosophers define an hypostasis as an essence with properties.[92] In *Ambiguum* 41 he sketches a Porphyrian tree at the bottom of which 'accidents, brought together one with another by the substance in which they inhere, possess unity, not being scattered at all by their substance'.[93] In Cappadocian thought we also find traces of what may be called a bundle theory. This theory seems to have originated with Plato in his *Theaetetus* (157b–c) where he suggests in passing that a sensible particular is nothing but a bundle of properties. In Porphyry Plato's suggestions are given clear expression:

> Socrates is said to be an individual, and so are this white thing, and this person approaching, and the son of Sophroniscus (should Socrates be his only son). Such items are called individuals because each is constituted of proper features the assemblage of which will never be found the same in anything else—the proper features of Socrates will never be found in any other of the particulars.[94]

Gregory of Nyssa explains his concept of material being in terms of such a theory.[95] More to the point in the present context is what he says in his *To his Brother Peter, on the Difference between Ousia and Hypostasis*: an hypostasis is defined as 'the concourse of the peculiar characteristics of each [person]'(*τὴν συνδρομὴν τῶν περὶ ἕκαστον ἰδιωμάτων*).[96] When Maximus defines an individual in *Opusculum* 26,

[90] *Antirrheticus* 3 Alpha 24, PG 99: 401a.

[91] Cf. Turcescu (1997) and Grillmeier (1975), 367–77 for a fuller treatment. Cf. St Basil, *Letter* 236, 401–2 (Loeb), 'Basil' *Letter* 38, 218 (Loeb) (= St Gregory of Nyssa, *To his Brother Peter, on the Difference between Ousia and Hypostasis*).

[92] *Opusc*. 26, PG 91: 276a–b.

[93] *Ambiguum* 41, PG 91: 1312d.

[94] Porphyry, *Introduction* (2008), 8, CAG 4.1, 7.

[95] Cf. *De anima et resurrectione*, GNO 3.3, 93–4, PG 46: 124b–d; *In hexaemeron*, GNO 4.1, 15–16, PG 44: 69b–c; *De hominis opificio* 24, PG 44: 212d–213b. English translation in Sorabji (2004, vol. 2), 159–61.

[96] 'Basil', *Letter* 38, 218 (Loeb).

he says that according to the philosophers, it is a collection (*συναγωγὴ*) of properties, and this bundle (*ἄθροισμα*) cannot be contemplated in another.[97]

If a human being is to be portrayed in an image, what is required is that it is perceived with particularizing properties. However, Theodore does not leave it at that, but suggests another aspect of the hypostasis that is perspicuously missing in the above account. This aspect is, as we shall see, important when it comes to the painting of icons.

The hypostasis of Christ is circumscribable according to His humanity, which is contemplated *ἐν ἀτόμῳ* in Christ, but remains uncircumscribable according to His divinity.[98] Against this background the iconoclast asks why one does not portray both natures, since even the hypostatic Christ is from both and in both. However, since the divine is uncircumscribable, it cannot be painted, and such an icon would, according to the iconoclast argument, falsify its subject. Theodore's answer points towards a satisfactory theological clarification of the conditions of painting: *it is not the nature that is portrayed; it is the hypostasis*. Natures cannot be painted. This solution, probably long expected after the complex arguments described above, seems sound, but in fact leaves something to be desired, even if Theodore's iconoclast does not perceive the latent problem. We shall return to this below. Let us first sum up the details of Theodore's position: Peter is not portrayed in so far as he is animate, rational, mortal, and capable of intellect and knowledge, but rather in so far as certain visible properties are added along with the common definition. What lurks in the background is the Cappadocian 'essence with properties', now an obvious part of Tradition. Speaking of Peter, Theodore suggests properties such as long or short nose, curly hair, good complexion, bright eyes, and 'other characteristics that are attached to his own *ἰδέα*' (*εἴ τι ἄλλο τὸ χαρακτηρίζον τὴν προσοῦσαν αὐτῷ ἰδέαν*).

The interesting term here is *ἰδέα*. Before we go further we have to decide how to translate it. I suggest we call it *appearance*, but then we have to distinguish this kind of appearance from the empty, docetic kind of appearance. Is it not the appearance (*ἰδέα*) of sets of properties that makes it possible to depict something?

Here, however, the problem alluded to above is encountered: if it is the hypostasis of Christ that is painted, it cannot be painted *as such*,

[97] *Opusc*. 26, PG 91: 276a–b.
[98] *Antirrheticus* 3 Alpha 24 and 34, PG 99: 401a and 405a–c.

if this same hypostasis is *the hypostatic being of the divine Logos himself*. His hypostasis is by nature definitely *not visible*. But if human nature is hypostasized *in concreto*, i.e. with particularizing properties in His (invisible) hypostasis, He may be painted as the one who carries such properties. Here we should note the necessary differentiation between two aspects of an hypostasis, viz. its inward and outward being. Its inward being is not visible as such, but its outward being is. However, this outwardness is not just an accidental collection of disjoined properties. Here I think Theodore is working out a rather sophisticated doctrine of the particular being's concreteness as an entity in the world. It appears as a whole, an ἰδέα, which it probably only can be because the hypostatic inwardness regulates its outward appearance. In the case of Christ, this hypostatic inwardness is the divine Logos as subject of a concrete human psychophysical (i.e. invisible as well as visible) presence.

The text witnesses several times to this conception. We found it already in the quotation above, where Theodore talked about characteristics attached to Peter's ἰδέα, which was translated as *appearance*.[99] In another context he uses the word εἶδος and says that the icon of Christ is said to have Christ's εἶδος in its delineation.[100] *Εἶδος* is usually translated as 'form', but it is reasonable to translate it as 'appearance' as well in the present context. It is not the nature of Christ that is seen in the icon, but rather His appearance. Could we find a clue to a more precise ontological definition of this appearance? In one place Theodore feels the need to distinguish between two senses of εἶδος: one is the universal sense, which we usually translate as species, while another sense is 'the form of each [individual], by which we differ from one another' (τῆς ἑκάστου μορφῆς, καθ' ἣν διαφέρομεν ἀλλήλων).[101] He obviously connects the meaning of εἶδος with the meaning of μορφή. The last term would not be used in the universal sense, but rather denotes something characteristic of a concrete, individual being: Peter's μορφή is not contemplated in Paul, nor is Paul's μορφή contemplated in Peter.[102] It seems obvious that the three terms ἰδέα, εἶδος, and μορφή connote one and the same concept, i.e. the *genuine particular appearance of someone*. Peter and Paul have different

[99] *Antirrheticus* 3 Alpha 34, PG 99: 405a–c.
[100] *Antirrheticus* 3 Gamma 10, PG 99: 424d.
[101] *Antirrheticus* 3 Delta 13, 433c.
[102] *Antirrheticus* 3 Gamma 8, PG 99: 424b–c.

appearances; any particular human being has its own genuine appearance. Theodore says that what is venerated in the icon is τὸ εἶδος τοῦ πρωτοτύπου, i.e. the genuine appearance of Christ with all visible properties set forth in a well-organized whole.[103]

It is quite interesting that Theodore makes a distinction between two senses of εἶδος. The history of this term in philosophy is rather long. It has been a matter of controversy among modern scholars whether Aristotle considers his form as universal or particular.[104] In late antique Neoplatonism one finds the difference between the universal Forms in the divine hypostasis of the Intellect and the particular forms as constitutive of particular beings within the natural world.[105] In Theodore we find a clear example of a thinker that considers 'form' (in one sense) as a feature of the particular. It is not to be understood as a simple collection of properties, but rather as a unifying feature of that which possesses a bundle of properties.

The introduction of additional terms makes it possible to develop Theodore's doctrine still further. He quotes from Luke 9:29 and mentions τὸ εἶδος τοῦ προσώπου αὐτοῦ, 'the appearance of his πρόσωπον'.[106] Roth translates πρόσωπον as countenance, which seems proper.[107] Christ, Theodore says, had 'a countenance circumscribed by certain properties, therefore Christ is circumscribed in respect to His bodily appearance (θέαν), just as He is uncircumscribable in respect of His invisible (ἀθέατον) essence'.

So far we have seen that three terms are used, viz. ἰδέα, εἶδος, and μορφή. In addition we have πρόσωπον and θέαν, countenance and appearance. If we think in an Aristotelian way, we would immediately associate the terminology of ἰδέα, εἶδος, and μορφή with the well-known matter–form distinction. It that case, the form would be an immanent principle in the particular, its essence, that would make it possible to identify an entity as a being of a certain kind, i.e. of a certain species.[108] This is probably not the way it should be taken here. It probably means something somehow different, and I suggest the following: in these texts Theodore applies the three terms to denote *the*

[103] *Antirrheticus* 3 Gamma 13, PG 99: 425c.
[104] I shall not go into any details on this, but see, for instance Witt (1989), chs 5 and 6.
[105] Cf. for instance Simplicius, *On Aristotle Categories 5–6* (2013), 24, CAG 8, 82–3.
[106] *Antirrheticus* 3 Alpha 53, PG 99: 413b–c.
[107] In St Theodore the Studite, *On the Holy Icons*, translated by C. P. Roth, 97. Cattoi in Theodore the Studite, *Writings on Iconoclasm*, 104, uses countenance as well as face.
[108] This is the topic of Aristotle in the *Metaphysics* bk 7.

outward appearance of an entity, not primarily as a kind, but as an individual. However, this appearance should not be understood as a superficial or purely outward phenomenon without deeper ontological content, something like a semblance or a phantom. Rather it should be understood as the entity's showing itself as a *particular* entity of this *kind*. In the 'showing' itself as a countenance the entity makes a certain *self-presentation* as a hypostasis of the human species.

The term *appearance as a whole* should perhaps be explained more fully. What we touch upon here concerns a general ontological and epistemological issue. How do we experience the things in this world? It seems that the experience of anything given does not occur as perceiving sense data or a bundle of attributes successively without any wholeness or organization. A given object, say a table, is not perceived as one, two, three, four legs successively, as patches of colour, as length, breadth, and depth added together in human consciousness. A table is immediately perceived as this whole thing, a table. A human being is not perceived successively as this and that shape of nose, this and that length of nose, this and that colour of skin, shape of beard or hair, volume, and length etc. added together. A human being is perceived as a distinctive human being, as this particular person or this countenance here, for instance as Peter. The *whole* is normally what appears first, and from one's immediate attention to the whole one might secondarily direct one's attention to details. According to Theodore, the icon does not portray a collection of properties. Rather it portrays this whole appearance, i.e. a countenance. It is this that lends itself to be depicted. Theodore says the icon is the ὁμοίωσις ('likeness') of Christ, obviously of Christ as such an appearance, and he further introduces the term ὄψις.[109] According to Liddell and Scott, this is the appearance of a person or thing, the face, the countenance of someone, obviously not in the general sense, but in a particular way. Theodore further stresses the *likeness* between Christ as prototype and the image, and says the image *qua* likeness shows the characteristic property (τὸ χαρακτηριστικὸν ἰδίωμα) of Christ.

There is one more thing that should be discussed before we end this chapter. Have we now arrived at a conclusion that what is painted in the icon is a *whole* of human features? In *Antirrheticus* 3 Theodore presents an iconoclast argument that starts with an objection applying Christ's words from John 14:9: 'He who has seen me has seen the

[109] *Antirrheticus* 3 Gamma 11, PG 99: 425a–b.

Father.'[110] The Son is the perfect image of the Father and therefore the Father appears (*φαίνεσθαι*) in Him. He that comes from the uncircumscribable must Himself be uncircumscribable. Only if this is the case may the Father be seen in Christ. Theodore first objects that since the incarnate Christ also comes from a circumscribed mother, He must be circumscribed. Consequently, He has both properties. However, Theodore is not quite satisfied with this conclusion, but develops his argument further. He bases his reflections on the principle 'what is like is like something that is like'. This may be made clearer if we say that 'since x is like y, y must be like x'. If we apply this to the incarnate Christ and the Father, we may say the following: since Christ is like the Father, the Father must be like Christ. We may acknowledge that Christ, even *qua* incarnate, is like the Father, since Christ does His Father's works. But if we claim that the Father is like the *incarnate* Son that cannot be true in an unqualified way. One might really doubt that we have *unqualified* epistemic access to the Father through the incarnate Son. On the other hand, since Christ definitely says that we have some kind of access, there must be an explanation for this.

First, Christ's words cannot mean that He is uncircumscribed like the Father in an unqualified way in His incarnate condition, so that we may see the uncircumscribed Father in an uncircumscribed Son. Secondly, the meaning cannot be that Christ *qua* circumscribed is like the Father, so that we perceive the Father as well as circumscribed. What can they mean then? The argumentative sequence concludes with the following saying: 'We are left with the alternative that He talks of the form of divinity, which is true.' How can this be a third alternative or an explanation? If Theodore really means this, how should we understand him?

What is it that appears in the appearance of Christ? In another paragraph Theodore says:[111] 'When anyone is portrayed, it is not the nature but the hypostasis which is portrayed. For how could a nature be portrayed unless it were contemplated in an hypostasis?' (*Παντὸς εἰκονιζομένου, οὐχ ἡ φύσις, ἀλλ' ἡ ὑπόστασις εἰκονίζεται· πῶς γὰρ ἂν καὶ ἐξεικονισθείη φύσις μὴ ὑποστάσει τεθεωρημένη*;) *Unless it were contemplated in an hypostasis*—a nature may then be contemplated in the hypostasis? Theodore's interpretation of John 14:9 seems to suggest that we may perceive 'the form of divinity' in perceiving the living Christ.

[110] *Antirrheticus* 3 Alpha 39–41, PG 99: 408b–409a.
[111] *Antirrheticus* 3 Alpha 34, PG 99: 405a–c (Roth's translation).

The portrayed hypostasis in the icon gives some access to the invisible nature of Christ. We may add a further quotation to this. Early in his first refutation, Theodore says: 'For this reason Christ is depicted in images, and the invisible is seen' (διὰ τοῦτο Χριστὸς εἰκονίζεται, καὶ ὁ ἀόρατος ὁρᾶται).[112] What we meet here is probably an indication of Theodore's doctrine of how the icon may be a source of theological insight, knowledge, or experience. However, what has been brought forward is not yet sufficiently clarifying. What has been shown so far is that Theodore tries to argue Christologically for certain conditions that make it possible to paint icons of Christ. But we have arrived at the question of how the icon should be understood as an object of *theological epistemology*. This includes the need to penetrate more deeply into Theodore's understanding of *perception as contemplation*. That is the topic of the fourth chapter on the true image. In order to highlight this subject we should first make a closer investigation into the relation between *image and prototype*.

[112] *Antirrheticus* 1.2, PG 99: 332a.

3

Relation

We have seen that one of the main objections to the icons from the iconoclast council of 754 emphasizes the concept of circumscription. St Theodore tries to refute this argument by entering into detailed Christological considerations. He admits, as we have seen, that the divinity of Christ remains uncircumscribed as such, but stresses the need to recognize that Christ's humanity imposes a certain circumscription on the God–man. Theodore argues that it is not natures that are the subject of painting, since natures encapsulate the essential features of an entity, and these are formal and not directly perceptible. What is painted is an hypostasis. The hypostasis of Christ, however, is the hypostasis of the Son of God, and is as such not visible. Visibility may only be achieved through its assumption of human nature in a concrete and particularizing way. All entities in the world, including the incarnate God, suffer some kind of circumscription, and Theodore shows how the universal human nature assumed by Christ was assumed in such a way that it manifested the same kind of external delimitations as every other human being in the world. Such an understanding of individuation is rather traditional, going back to the Cappadocian fathers' concept of an hypostasis as an *essence with properties*. However, at this stage Theodore seems to develop his notion of an individual a step further. In one sense this is not his own contribution because the terminology has been used earlier. On the other hand, Theodore applies it in way that suits his purpose of justifying the making of images: an individual or an hypostasis is not simply an essence with properties or a bundle of properties gathered in an essential subject in such a way that *this* particular entity is different from *that* because each bundle is something unique. Even if beings are such bundles of properties in a subject, a being always *shows* itself as a certain whole, a whole that is manifest in its *appearance* (εἶδος) or

countenance (ὄψις). This appearance or countenance is probably the self-presentation of the entity in its uniqueness. Whether this is Theodore's original contribution or not, it witnesses to an epistemology that is non-empiricist and closer to what in modern philosophy we would call phenomenological.

Because the iconoclasts had such a narrow focus on the problem of circumscription there was for them no real subject of painting. Since an essential dimension of Christ, the God–man, is uncircumscribable, He cannot be the subject of a true, painted image. All images of Christ, therefore, pretend to be something they cannot be, and function consequently as idols. For this reason it was of no interest for the iconoclasts to pay any attention to the relation between a prototype and an image. Such a relation would only be false. They would definitely claim that there is no such thing as a prototype for the icon of Christ. Theodore, on the other hand, argues that Christ may in principle be a subject for painting since He appears as an entity in the world. It is therefore necessary for Theodore to investigate the *relation* between prototype and icon, and this is the subject of the present chapter.

PROTOTYPE AND IMAGE

Scholars who write on the iconoclast controversy often say that according to the iconophiles the icons belong to the category of 'relative things'. Meyendorff, for instance, says that the veneration given to the image does not have the image for ultimate object, since the image is a relative (πρός τι) connected with the represented object.[1] Roth explains that an image, being a relative thing, 'directs the attention from itself to its prototype'.[2] She continues: 'The image and the prototype differ in essence, but share the same likeness and are called by the same name.' Parry picks up the same points that Roth makes and says that the image refers to Christ 'by the relation of likeness (ὁμοιωτικὴ ἐμφέρεια)' and 'the artificial image is identical with its prototype in likeness but different in essence'.[3] The relation between image and

[1] Meyendorff (1975), 183–4.

[2] Roth in the introduction to St Theodore the Studite, *On the Holy Icons* (New York, 1981), 12.

[3] Parry (1996), 30 and 61–2. See also 58.

prototype, the difference in essence of the two related items, and the function of the concept of likeness will be discussed below. Scholars are obviously aware of the fact that the category of relation plays a certain role in the defence of icons, but they do not write much about it and they do not seem to realize how basic it is for Theodore.

The terminology of image and prototype, derivation and prototype, effect and cause, impression and seal is central in Theodore's defence. All of these concepts are fundamentally statements of relations. We shall first make some comments on his terminology.

The terminology of image and prototype turns up again and again in Theodore's refutations. We shall bring in some of the other formulas for consideration. In the second refutation he says that 'every man is the prototype of his own image, and there could not be a man who would not have a derivation that would be his own representation' (ἐπειδὴ οὖν πᾶς ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἑαυτοῦ εἰκόνος πρωτότυπόν ἐστι, καὶ οὐκ ἂν εἴη ἄνθρωπος μὴ ἔχων παράγωγον τὸ ἑαυτοῦ ἀπεικόνισμα).[4] (We shall return to some problems connected with this saying below.) In the first *Antirrheticus* he also speaks of the thing itself and its typos, of the πρωτότυπος and the παράγωγος, and of the αἴτιον and the αἰτιατόν.[5] In the same section the icon is further said to be a kind of seal and impression (σφραγίς and ἐκτύπωσις) that carries in itself the proper *appearance* (εἶδος) of that after which it is called.

In Classical Greek the term παράγωγος is used as an adjective with negative senses like misleading or deceitful, and this is obviously far from the sense we have here. There is also listed the neutral sense of *derived from*, as when a word is derived from another word.[6] In our present context the noun obviously means a *derivation*, of course with no negative connotations at all. However, one should ask: *how* is the icon derived from its prototype, and *what* exactly does it mean to be such a derivation? Theodore answers these questions:[7] the icon is derived from the prototype through the activity of the artisan, and to be such a derivation means that the icon reproduces or represents the likeness of the appearance of the prototype. We shall go more deeply into these things below.

It might immediately seem rather strange to use the terminology of cause and effect (αἴτιον and αἰτιατόν) in this connection. The prototype

[4] *Antirrheticus* 2.6, PG 99: 356b (my translation).
[5] *Antirrheticus* 1.8, PG 99: 337a–d.
[6] Cf. Liddell and Scott, s.v. παράγωγος.
[7] *Antirrheticus* 2.6, PG 99: 356b; cf. 2.11, PG 99: 357c–d.

can obviously not be the efficient cause of the image. If we think of a Platonic relationship between a transcendent Form and its derivation, 'something like' (i.e. a Form) would somehow be the efficient cause of 'something like' (the image). However, as Plato shows in the *Timaeus*, there would need to be a Demiurge or, in the present case, an *artisan*. Theodore probably holds the prototype to be a paradigmatic cause—i.e. a 'cause' that functions as a paradigm or 'measure' for something else—that is formed in a proper medium by the activity of the artisan (as efficient cause).[8] If that is the case, the icon is an effect since the likeness is artificially transferred to the medium.

The language of seal and impression is also interesting. The σφραγίς, which could mean a gem or a stone of a ring, is the seal or signet that leaves impressions in a suitable material like wax. It can, as a matter of fact, also mean the impression itself, but that is not what it means here. The ἐκτύπωσις is something modelled in relief, a figure that is somehow impressed. What we have here then is the seal (σφραγίς) that makes an impression (ἐκτύπωσις). The relation of the cross to its ἀποσφράγισμα illustrates the impression analogy once more: in Classical Greek the ἀποσφράγισμα is the impression of a seal. Here it is an impression or reproduction in general. This illustration is probably chosen to stress the close relation between archetype and image. The seal leaves an exact impression in wax even if inverted—something Theodore does not comment on. We'll return to the topic of exact impression below.

The basic concept of *relation* unifies these ideas. Aristotle introduced 'the relative' (πρός τι) as one of his ten categories.[9] We saw in Chapter 1 that Theodore did not mention the relative in his list of categories. This is rather strange, since the list is an enumeration of kinds of circumscription and the relative would definitely function as such a kind: for instance to be the child of parents should delimit the being of some entities in the world. What is really striking, however, is that the relative, despite lacking in the list, plays such a crucial role in Theodore's thought.

We should turn to Aristotle for a first description of the relative, but it is a reasonable question whether we gain anything by that. We cannot just take it for granted that Theodore knew the details of Aristotle's *Categories* or the tradition of the commentators (even if we cannot

[8] *Antirrheticus* 2.9 and 2.11, PG 99: 357a–b and c–d.
[9] Cf. Aristotle, *Categories*, especially ch. 7.

exclude that possibility either) and use Aristotelian doctrine as a measuring stick for his application of relation. In other words, we cannot read Aristotle's and the commentators' doctrine into Theodore. On the other hand, turning to the Aristotelian tradition may make us aware of features of Theodore's argumentation and reasoning that we would miss without this background knowledge. In short we might be in a better position to shed some light on what Theodore actually says. As I have already said, I cannot see that Theodore is an expert logician. Even so, he seems to have mastered certain logical concepts and tools rather well. When it comes to the relative, it seems to me that he knows several aspects of Aristotelian theory, probably from the tradition of the commentators or from some handbooks that we are unfortunately not in a position to identify.

Aristotle describes the relative (*πρός τι*) in the following way in the *Categories*:[10] 'all those things are spoken of as relative which, whatever they themselves are, are said to be "of" other things, or in some relation to another thing'. There is another description as well:[11] 'those things are relative for which to be is the same as to be disposed relatively to something'. According to Sorabji, the second definition 'requires that the very being of a relative should consist in the relation'.[12] Aristotle's relatives are not relations, but things related. In his commentary on the *Categories* Porphyry says that the first description 'conveys that relatives are not absolute, but exist in a relation of one thing to another' (*ἐν σχέσει τινὸς πρὸς ἄλλο τι*).[13] Two things are relatives if their being is stated as 'of' each other, like a son is a son *of* a father and a father is the father *of* a son.

The last sections of *Antirrheticus* 3 (Beta–Delta) contain Theodore's most elaborate application of the relative.[14] He claims that prototype and image belong to the group of things that are relative (*τῶν πρός τί ἐστιν*).[15] He focuses on these as 'things related'. However, Theodore also brings in the *relation* as such, viz. likeness:[16] 'The prototype and

[10] *Categories* 6a36–7. I follow Sorabji's translations here, cf. Sorabji (2004, vol. 3), 79–80. The two descriptions give rise to some problems that, fortunately, we do not have to address in this context.

[11] *Categories* 8a31–2.

[12] Sorabji (2004, vol. 3), 79.

[13] Porphyry, *On Aristotle Categories* (2014), 113, CAG 4.1, 112.

[14] *Antirrheticus* 3 Beta–Delta, PG 99: 417a–436a.

[15] *Antirrheticus* 3 Delta 4, PG 99: 429b.

[16] *Antirrheticus* 3 Delta 1, PG 99: 428c.

the image are one in hypostatic likeness, but two in nature…'. All of this needs some highlighting.

First we should note that prototype and image are held to be relatives: a prototype is the prototype of an image and the image is the image of a prototype. Whatever the two might be in themselves as substances, when the one is the prototype of the other *qua* image, then the being of the two related items consists in the relation of the one thing to the other, as Porphyry puts it in the quotation above. This is probably what Theodore has in mind when he says 'The prototype and the image have their being, as it were, in each other' (*Τὸ πρωτότυπον καὶ ἡ εἰκὼν, οἷον ἐν ἀλλήλοις ἔχει τὸ εἶναι*).[17] This interpretation is confirmed when he further says that with the removal of the one the other is removed as well: it is like the case when the removal of the double takes the half away with it. Here the question of the simultaneous existence (their being ἅμα) of the relatives arises, something we shall come back to. According to Theodore the prototype holds its being as such precisely because it is *of* something, i.e. it is the prototype of an image. The reverse also holds: the being of the image consists precisely in its being *of* the prototype, i.e. it is the image of a prototype. The two items mutually condition each other. So being image or being prototype is somehow like being double or being half: the relatives hold their being, to use Theodore's words, 'in each other'. Aristotle says all relatives are spoken of in relation to correlatives that reciprocate: a slave is called the slave of a master and a master is called the master of a slave.[18] Theodore is obviously aware of that.

We encountered above the topic of the simultaneous existence (their being ἅμα) of the relatives. Aristotle says that relatives in most cases seem to be simultaneous by nature (ἅμα τῇ φύσει).[19] Porphyry says that things are simultaneous when they introduce or eliminate each other.[20] His example is that father introduces child along with itself and child introduces father along with itself, since without a child there cannot be a father and without a father there cannot be a child. This idea of simultaneity is notably present in Theodore's refutations and there are reasons to believe that it underwent some development from his second to his third refutation.

[17] *Antirrheticus* 3 Delta 5, PG 99: 429c.
[18] *Categories* 6b28–30.
[19] *Categories* 7b15.
[20] Porphyry, *On Aristotle Categories* (2014), 123, CAG 4.1, 118.

Simultaneity enters the argument in the second refutation where Theodore's reasoning seems erroneous. He seems to adhere to a strong belief that things that are relatives imply one another necessarily. The iconoclast interlocutor asks for scriptural testimony for the veneration of icons.[21] The orthodox answers boldly that this is testified whenever it is written that *we should venerate the prototype of the icon*. The iconoclast, however, retorts that it is written that 'You should venerate the Lord your God, and Him alone shall you worship', and neither any prototype nor an icon.[22] The iconophile claims that this citation is about *theology*, while it is the *economy* that is relevant, because prototype and icon belong to the latter since they are about the Logos' assumption of flesh.[23] The iconoclast, however, remains unconvinced: the Scriptures say nothing of prototype and icon.[24]

A reader of Theodore's treatises with any knowledge of the Bible would immediately tend to agree: prototype and icon (image) does not turn up as a topic there. However, he has an answer to this challenge. Theodore makes the simple claim that whenever the New Testament speaks of Christ, it speaks of Christ Himself and this is the prototype. We may ask: the prototype of what? Theodore answers: the prototype of an icon. Then he makes the bold claim, already quoted above, that 'every man is the prototype of his own image, and there could not be a man who would not have a derivation that would be his own representation' (*ἐπειδὴ οὖν πᾶς ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἑαυτοῦ εἰκόνος πρωτότυπόν ἐστι, καὶ οὐκ ἂν εἴη ἄνθρωπος μὴ ἔχων παράγωγον τὸ ἑαυτοῦ ἀπεικόνισμα*).[25] However, this sounds rather strange. It is, of course, obvious that if there is a prototype then there is an image, and if there is an image then there is a prototype. It is also reasonable that a man is a prototype of an image if there is an image of him. But is it reasonable to claim that if there is a human being then this human being is a prototype? Would not this be a violation of Aristotelian doctrine, since the relative is not an essential property? We shall have to ask what Theodore actually means. Is his claim in any sense reasonable?

Theodore claims that there cannot be a man who would not have a derivation that would be his own representation. This topic is further developed in *Antirrheticus* 3.[26] Theodore says that the product of a

[21] *Antirrheticus* 2.2, PG 99: 353c.
[22] *Antirrheticus* 2.3, PG 99: 353c–d.
[23] *Antirrheticus* 2.4, PG 99: 353d.
[24] *Antirrheticus* 2.5, PG 99: 353d–356a.
[25] *Antirrheticus* 2.6, PG 99: 356b.
[26] *Antirrheticus* 3 Beta 1–7, PG 99: 417a–420c.

craft is an imitation of something natural. However, a natural image resembles a natural archetype naturally, and an artificial image resembles a natural archetype artificially. Christ is the natural image of his Mother, and He will also have an artificial image: 'He would not be the natural image of His Mother, if He did not have an artificial image as she has.' The natural image is exactly like (ἀπαράλλακτος) both in essence and in likeness (ὁμοίωσις) with that of which it is an imprint (ἀποσφράγισμα). Christ, therefore, is exactly like His Father in divinity, and His Mother in humanity. The artificial image, however, is the same (ταυτιζομένη) as the archetype in *likeness*, but different in essence. This is how it is with Christ and His icon. What is shown in the image refers to the prototype, and if there is no prototype without an image, then Christ, becoming like us, has an artificial image that refers to Him by the resemblance of *likeness*. This is the essence of what Theodore says.

It is quite clear that Theodore thinks that if we know that one of two related items exists, we immediately know that the other exists as well. In general this holds: if we know there is a double, we know there is a half, and if we know there is a son, we know there is a father as well. Such relatives exist simultaneously. However, the following cannot hold: if we know that a human being exists then we know for certain that there is an image of this human being as well. This cannot be correct without some further qualification.

The problem with this line of argument is whether an hypostasis of a particular kind needs to be a prototype, an archetype, or a paradigm. Is not an entity essentially just itself? Will not being a prototype come as an *addition* to its essence or being, since according to Aristotelian philosophy it is an accident? The commentator Ammonius sees this clearly and says: 'For that, one must note that relatives can be thought of in two ways: either as independent things (*pragmata*) in themselves, or as bound in a relation.'[27] The point is well illustrated in John Philoponus' *Against Proclus On the Eternity of the World*, for even if the context is somewhat different, Philoponus at a certain stage addresses a similar logical relation as the one Theodore puts forward:

> If there is an image, there must also be a paradigm; but, even if there is a paradigm, though not [merely] as a paradigm, but because it is also substance (*ousia*), there is no necessity for an image to be as well. The

[27] Ammonius, *On Aristotle Categories* (London 1991), 91, CAG 4.4, 76.

> emperor himself is the paradigm of the imperial image, but this does not mean that simultaneous with the being of the emperor an image of him must be as well.[28]

This reasoning is philosophically sound and Theodore therefore seems to be wrong. It should be noted that the simultaneous existence of relatives is discussed both by Aristotle and his commentators. As we saw above, Aristotle says in the *Categories* that relatives 'seem to be simultaneous by nature (ἅμα τῇ φύσει); and in most cases this is true'.[29] He continues: 'Also, one carries the other to destruction; for if there is not a double there is not a half, and if there is not a half there is not a double.'[30] However, in his further discussion Aristotle shows that this is not true of all relatives. The knowable, he says, seems to be prior to knowledge, since as a rule something exists before it is known.[31] In other words, something may exist and it may in principle be knowable, but it is not yet known or discovered by us. Porphyry also discusses the knowable and knowledge in his commentary on the *Categories*.[32] He has a provisional conclusion that 'it is not a property of all relatives to be simultaneous by nature, so that this cannot be a proprium of relatives'.[33] However, he modifies this conclusion:

> For the object of perception insofar as it is perceptible does not remain or exist if there is no perception of it, nor does the object of knowledge insofar as it is knowable remain or exist when there is no knowledge of it. If the knowable object does exist when there is no knowledge of it, it will exist potentially (δυνάμει), and will not be an actual knowable object. But if it is potentially knowable, because it is possible for there to come to be knowledge of it, then the knowledge of it will also exist potentially, because it is possible for its object of knowledge to come to exist.[34]

Porphyry claims, quite reasonably, that when no one perceives a certain thing because it is beyond the reach of perception, then this thing does not (at the moment) exist as an object of perception. For instance, if I remove one of my icons and bury it in the ground, it is not

[28] Philoponus, Contra Proclum, ed. Rabe (1963), 36, my translation; also translated in Philoponus, *Against Proclus On the Eternity of the World 1–5* (2004), 38.
[29] Aristotle, *Categories* 7b15–16.
[30] Aristotle, *Categories* 7b19–22.
[31] Aristotle, *Categories* 7b22–7.
[32] Porphyry, *On Aristotle Categories* (2014), 121–35, CAG 4.1, 117–25.
[33] Porphyry, *On Aristotle Categories* (2014), 127, CAG 4.1, 120.
[34] Porphyry, *On Aristotle Categories* (2014), 127–8, CAG 4.1, 120. The Greek term is inserted by me. Similar reasonings appear in Ammonius, *On Aristotle Categories* (1991), 87–91, CAG 4.4, 73–7.

perceptible any more and it has ceased to be something perceived. The same will happen in the case of a knowable entity. Porphyry goes further and says such a thing will exist *potentially*, i.e. will be a potential object of knowledge. Further, the knowledge of it will also exist potentially, and for this reason it might be suggested that simultaneity after all functions as a property of relatives. To sum up: the potentially knowable is relative to potential knowledge, while the actually knowable is relative to actual knowledge. The same point is made by Ammonius.[35]

In the case of the prototype and the image, if the prototype is not essentially a prototype, but rather a substance, it is only potentially a prototype: the emperor as a human being is a substance and not by essence a prototype of his image, even though he may potentially be such a prototype. Theodore seems at first not to grasp this. However, he develops his position in a sounder direction in later paragraphs of the third *Antirrheticus*.[36] Maybe he wrote those paragraphs as an afterthought. First he presents an iconoclast objection that explicates the problem dealt with above: if Christ is the prototype of His image and exists naturally (*φύσει*), but His image exists by arrangement (*θέσει*), how can the latter exist simultaneously (*ἅμα*) with Him?[37] 'For it is not true that as soon as Christ was seen His delineated image came along with Him.' Christ and His image, the iconoclast argues, are separated by a *lapse of time*. It is quite interesting that Theodore lets his opponent put this rather strong argument forward. This is one of those instances in which Theodore does not make his own case easy for himself, and he refines his argument.

Theodore states that every body is inseparably followed by its own shadow. No body is shadowless, and by analogy nobody could say that Christ is imageless. We can see Christ's image *in Christ*, and in this image Christ is seen as a prototype:[38] 'From the simultaneous existence of both, it follows that when Christ is seen, then His image is also *potentially* seen, and consequently is transferred by imprint to any material whatever.' Is it not a rather obscure saying that we can see Christ's image in Christ—whatever that should mean? Probably what we see in Christ is His *countenance*, and this countenance leads us to

[35] Ammonius, *On Aristotle Categories* (1991), 91, CAG 4.4, 76–7.

[36] *Antirrheticus* 3 Delta 2–5, PG 99: 428d–429d.

[37] The iconoclast plays on the ancient distinction between *φύσις* and *θέσις*, and Roth translates *θέσει* here as to exist arbitrarily. I find this somehow unsatisfactory and suggest by arrangement instead.

[38] *Antirrheticus* 3 Delta 2, PG 99: 429a. (Roth's translation, the italics are mine.)

the concept of *likeness* that is essential for Theodore's doctrine of images: the likeness is the 'element' that connects prototype and image. It is the relation as such between two relatives. Because we see the countenance, we see the likeness and therefore somehow see the image in Christ. However, it is the introduction of *potentiality* that solves the present problem for Theodore. He clearly admits that the artificial image is later than the prototype as a naturally existing entity, but the image has already (immediately) a potential existence in Christ before an artisan produces it. If a human being exists, this human being is potentially depictable, and one may claim that the 'image' is potentially present in the prototype. This means that the potential paradigm is related to the potential image and the actual paradigm is related to the actual image. This conclusion is in principle in accordance with Porphyry's distinction treated above.

Theodore takes this argument about the potential presence of the image a step further by bringing in a seal (*σφραγίς*) and its imprint (*ἀπόμαγμα*).[39] The illustration is quite interesting: 'If he who looks at the seal and its imprint sees a similar and unchanged appearance in both, then the imprint exists in the seal even before the impression is made.' (*Εἰ ὁ ἐνορῶν τὴν σφραγίδα καὶ τὸ ταύτης ἐκμαγεῖον, ὅμοιον ἐν ἀμφοτέροις τὸ εἶδος καὶ ἀπαράλλακτον ὁρᾷ· ἔνεστιν ἄρα ἐν τῇ σφραγίδι καὶ πρὸ τῆς ἐκτυπώσεως τὸ ἐκμαγεῖον.*) One sees the appearance of the form in the seal and—if one understands that it is a seal—understands immediately, one could claim, that this is potentially an imprint in a suitable material. This reasoning seems to come close to a point made by Aristotle:

> It is clear from this that if someone knows any relative definitely he will also know definitely that in relation to which it is spoken of. This is obvious on the face of it. For if someone knows of a certain 'this' that it is a relative, and being for relatives is the same as being somehow related to something, he knows that also to which this is somehow related.[40]

When is the relation realized? The saying 'if someone knows of a certain "this" (*τόδε τι*) that it is a relative', seems to mean that we *already* know that 'this' is a relative. However, could we not immediately before this recognition consider 'this' as something still potentially relative, i.e. something in which one discovers a property that

[39] *Antirrheticus* 3 Delta 9–10, PG 99: 432d–433a. (Roth's translation. I have changed her 'form' to 'appearance'.)

[40] *Categories* 8a35–8b1.

immediately might make it an actual relative? If the interpretation given above of Theodore's thinking is correct, we seem to be in a position to formulate his position thus: if to know Christ is to know an entity with a certain appearance or countenance, then to know Christ thus is to know him as potentially depictable, but when He is known as potentially depictable He is immediately known as the prototype of a possible depiction.

These considerations bring us to something rather interesting: Aristotle thinks that if we know a relative definitely, we will also know definitely what it is in relation to (which it is spoken of), since 'being for relatives is the same as being somehow related to something'. Then, to know the icon as a relative, i.e. to know the depiction in the material object as related to a particular substance that is its prototype, opens up the possibility that the image in the context of liturgy and prayer may function as a means for recollection and contemplation. We shall return to this below.

There is one additional point of some importance. Aristotle says that relatives admit of more and less:

> Relatives seem also to admit of a more and a less. For a thing is called more similar and less similar (*ὅμοιον γὰρ μᾶλλον καὶ ἧττον λέγεται*), and more unequal and less unequal; and each of these is relative, since what is similar is called similar to something and what is unequal is unequal to something. But not all admit of a more and less; for what is double, or anything like that, is not called more double or less double.[41]

Porphyry remarks that 'when one thing is like another, the latter is like the former'.[42] Theodore considers this topic and problems related to it. How should we characterize the icon in relation to its prototype? In what way is it like the prototype? He comments on this in the third *Antirrheticus*:

Even if we grant that the image does not have the same form as the prototype because of insufficient artistic skill, still our argument would not be invalid. For veneration is given to the image not insofar as it falls short of similarity, but insofar as it resembles its prototype. In this degree the image has the same form as the prototype; and the objects of veneration are not two, but one and the same, the prototype in the image.[43]

[41] *Categories* 6b19–24. (Ackrill's translation, Greek terms inserted by me.)
[42] Porphyry, *On Aristotle Categories* (2014), 115, CAG 4.1, 113.
[43] *Antirrheticus* 3 Gamma 5, PG 99: 421c (Roth's translation).

Ὅτι εἰ καὶ μὴ δῶμεν ἰσότυπον εἶναι τὴν εἰκόνα πρὸς τὸ πρωτότυπον ἐξ ἀτεχνίας, οὐδ' οὕτως ἔξει τὸ ἄτοπον ὁ λόγος. Οὐ γὰρ ᾗ ὑπολέλειπται τῆς ἐμφερείας, ἀλλὰ ᾗ ὡμοίωται, ἡ προσκύνησις· ἰσοτυπούσης ἐν τούτῳ τῆς εἰκόνος τῷ πρωτοτύπῳ, καὶ οὐ δύο ὄντων τῶν προσκυνουμένων, ἀλλ' ἑνὸς καὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ, κάν τῇ εἰκόνι πρωτοτύπου …

It is tempting to remark, as was done above, that because the imprint in wax is inverted, the impression is not exactly similar to the seal. Likewise the image may deviate from its prototype and this seems to create a challenge. Theodore thinks there is a *sameness in likeness* between image and prototype.[44] How may we know that the delineation in the image is similar to the prototype? One may wonder: how do we know what the prototype looked like? Theodore writes as if Christ is an accessible object of sight.[45] (He uses the verb *ὁράω*.) In the second refutation we find a quotation from Pseudo-Basil which says that the painter, the stone-carver, or the maker of sculptures 'takes matter, looks (*ἀπεῖδεν*, 2. aor. of *ἀποράω*) at the prototype, receives the imprint of that which he contemplates (*τοῦ τεθεωρημένου*), and presses it like a seal into his material'.[46] Here we have the verbs *ἀποράω* and *θεωρέω*. These verbs suggest an act of perception that is more attentive than just looking at something or throwing a glance at something. This should be expected when there is talk of artistic imitation because the artist considers his model carefully before he executes his work. *Ἀποράω* probably means to fix one's eyes on something and *θεωρέω* must here mean to look carefully at something. Philosophers are used to taking the last verb as designating intellectual activity, i.e. to 'look at' or 'see' something with the mind. The verb often has this sense in theological literature as well. Here, however, it is used of some kind of attentive, perceptive act.

Theodore writes as if the artisan had the model available to himself. But that cannot be the case. Christ was once seen by His followers, but after His Ascension He is seen no more, except in quite extraordinary circumstances. How are we to understand these sayings by Theodore? There are no references in the refutations to the so-called *acheiropoieta*, i.e. images not made by human hands, in order to legitimize that we know the countenance of Christ. Even the iconoclast Definition of

[44] Cf. *Antirrheticus* 3 Beta 1–7, PG 99: 417a–420c.
[45] *Antirrheticus* 3 Delta 2 and 3, PG 99: 429a–b.
[46] *Antirrheticus* 2.11, PG 99: 357d.

754 does not state an argument based on the notion that we do not know what He looked like.

It is important now that we do not confuse Theodore's teaching about prototype and image with these problems of likeness. It is rather easy to misunderstand Theodore against the background of what is stated above. We may inspect a seal and see its features with our own eyes, but we cannot fix our eyes with attention on Christ as if He were present in the same way as the seal might be. However, Theodore is probably not making a point about this or that particular entity, but about a general principle: *if* there is an entity, say a man, *then* this man is potentially the prototype of his image. The image is already in him. He could be anybody, Peter, John, or Paul. And if Christ was manifested as a particular human being in the world of place and time it could be Him. An entity may be painted. A man may be painted since it is obvious what general features a man should have, but the question of whether the icon delineates the likeness of the particular instance of Christ accurately is so far not relevant.

The question of the accurate likeness of a *particular* icon of Christ to the *particular* being of Christ is not a question about a general (universal) principle, but is rather a question of how the general principle will work when applied to a particular case. The general principle may be valid even if there were problems with its application to such a specific case. It is in this connection that we run up against the question of access to Christ as the model of an image.

Theodore considers the prototype a *standard* for making a copy and basic to his argument is the concept of *likeness* (ὁμοίωσις). That which constitutes the relation between prototype and image is the likeness: the icon delineates the likeness of the appearance of Christ and therefore the icon is the image *of* Christ and Christ is the prototype *of* the image. Maybe the problem is not as severe as it might seem to be. *We* may think that a portrait should incorporate a whole set of particular features of a personal kind in order to represent the 'character' of its subject. It should, in other words be 'realistic'. But do we know that the ancients thought that way, *in casu* Theodore? We live in an age of photography, portraiture, and mirrors. We may think that exact quantitative similarity is required, but one may reasonably doubt that such similarity mattered very much to the Byzantines. What would the icon painter need to know about his subject? Probably that Christ was a man, from the eastern Mediterranean, with dignified looks—He is God incarnate, even with an authoritative 'divine' appearance. This is

perhaps what Theodore thinks the artisan should 'see', be attentive to, or contemplate.

We shall dwell on this a bit further. A couple of quotations from the third refutation are interesting in connection with the problem discussed above:

When anyone is portrayed, it is not the nature but the hypostasis which is portrayed. For how could a nature be portrayed unless it was contemplated in a hypostasis? For example, Peter is not portrayed insofar as he is animate, rational, mortal, and capable of thought and understanding;[47] for this does not define Peter only, but also Paul and John, and all those of the same species. But insofar as he adds along with the common definition certain properties, such as long or short nose, curly hair, a good complexion, bright eyes, or whatever else characterizes his particular appearance, he is distinguished from the other individuals of the same species.[48]

Παντὸς εἰκονιζομένου, οὐχ ἡ φύσις, ἀλλ' ἡ ὑπόστασις εἰκονίζεται· πῶς γὰρ ἂν καὶ ἐξεικονισθείη φύσις μὴ ἐν ὑποστάσει τεθεωρημένη; οἷον φέρε εἰπεῖν, Πέτρος, οὐ καθὸ ζῶον λογικὸν, θνητὸν, νοῦ καὶ ἐπιστήμης δεκτικόν ἐστι, εἰκονίζεται· τοῦτο γὰρ οὐ μόνον Πέτρον ὁρίζει· ἀλλὰ γὰρ καὶ Παῦλον καὶ Ἰωάννην, καὶ πάντας τοὺς ὑπὸ τὸ αὐτὸ εἶδος. Ἀλλὰ καθότι μετὰ τοῦ κοινοῦ ὅρου προσλαβὼν ἰδιώματά τινα, οἷον τὸ γρυπὸν, ἢ σιμὸν, ἢ οὖλον, ἢ εὔχρουν, ἢ εὐόμματον, ἢ εἴ τι ἄλλο τὸ χαρακτηρίζον τὴν προσοῦσαν αὐτῷ ἰδέαν, διακέκριται ἀπὸ τῶν ὁμοειδῶν ἀτόμων.

Obviously we do not contemplate Peter's form, for example, in Paul; nor conversely does anyone see Paul's form in Peter's form. For like appears in like; but things which differ from each other in likeness could never appear in each other.[49]

Οὐ γὰρ δήπου τὴν τοῦ Πέτρου, φέρε εἰπεῖν, μορφὴν ἐν τῷ Παύλῳ θεωρήσομεν· οὐδ' ἂν πάλιν τὴν τοῦ Παύλου κατόψεταί τις ἐν τῇ τοῦ Πέτρου μορφῇ. Τὸ γὰρ ὅμοιον ἐν τῷ ὁμοίῳ φαίνεται· τὰ δὲ τῆς ἀλλήλων ὁμοιότητος ἀπεσχοινισμένα, οὐκ ἂν ἐν ἀλλήλοις φαίνοιτό ποτε …

We may consider icon painting a representational art, which means that it looks to outward features and is an attempt to represent human

[47] It is interesting that this definition of man also occurs in Roueché (1974), 70: *ἄνθρωπός ἐστι ζῷον λογικόν, θνητόν, νοῦ καὶ ἐπιστήμης δεκτικόν*. It is probably commonplace in the tradition of the commentators.

[48] *Antirrheticus* 3 Alpha 34, PG 99: 405a–b (Roth's translation).

[49] *Antirrheticus* 3 Gamma 8, PG 99: 424b (Roth's translation).

form and action.[50] As the first quotation states, Peter is painted not as a representative of his common species, which cannot be painted, but according to his particular appearance (ἰδέα). According to the second quotation, Peter has a 'form' (μορφή), an appearance, that makes him different from Paul. When Theodore enumerates relevant features, we are given length of nose, curly hair, good complexion, bright eyes, and 'whatever else characterizes his particular appearance (ἰδέαν)'. These characteristics are quite general and stereotyped. As such they are very much like what we find in Dionysius of Fourna's *Painters Manual* from the first part of the eighteenth century.[51] The description of St Paul is quite typical: 'Paul, bald, with a brown, rush-like beard and grey hair, holding the fourteen epistles rolled up and tied together.' As I understand it, there would be no need for the artist that the sitter should be present and be contemplated in the way a modern artist would contemplate his model. Only a certain set of characteristics would be needed in order to achieve the required similarity, and Theodore stresses that we should emphasize similarity, not dissimilarity, in our evaluation of an image as related to its prototype.[52] Even if the icon is a portrait or a representation of a model, it is not something that can be measured by our measures. Icon painting is in a sense an 'abstract' art in which a limited set of *idiomata* are needed in order to present a certain person.

Maguire treats the problem we have addressed here in an interesting way in his book *The Icons of their Bodies*. Maguire tries to shed light on the Byzantine notion that icons are lifelike, true to life, or even in many instances said to be accurately made.[53] He claims, and I believe correctly, that the difference between the modern and the Byzantine approach to images is one of expectation:[54] 'When a modern viewer speaks of an image being "lifelike", the expectation is that it will be illusionistic, with realistic effects of lighting and perspective, like a photograph. The Byzantines, however, did not seek optical illusionism in their portraits, but rather accuracy of definition.' The image should, he continues, be sufficiently defined to enable the viewer to identify

[50] Cf. Levinson ed. (2013), 138. It might be, however, that icon painting also has an expressionist aspect, since to some degree it conveys certain moods, attitudes, and 'features' depending on internal conditions like virtues, holiness, divinity, majesty, etc.

[51] Dionysius of Fourna (1989), 52.

[52] *Antirrheticus* 3 Gamma 5, PG 99: 421c–d.

[53] Maguire (1996), 5. The first two chapters of this book are particularly relevant and very interesting regarding the topic treated above.

[54] Maguire (1996), 16.

the holy figure represented. Maguire then identifies some 'categories of definition' that are quite illuminating in connection with the present topic.[55] These categories are (i) classes of saints (apostles, bishops, ascetics, etc.), (ii) portrait types, with emphasis on facial features, and (iii) the inscription on the icon. Such categories made it possible for the Byzantine viewer to identify a holy person quite easily. The identification of saints according to class counts on both external things like dress, but also on features of corporeality and immateriality.[56] Maguire shows how important saints from quite an early stage acquired a set of standard features in the delineation of their facial appearance. If he is correct and it is sufficient for the Byzantine viewer to reckon an image as lifelike in accordance with categories like those mentioned above, one still has to face the issue of how to obtain the lifelike and accurate image of a dead saint or the holy person who is no longer available for observation. Maguire points out that an image may gain the 'authority of time' and in order to obtain an authentic or a true image of, say, Christ, one has to rely on *copying* prototypes that are handed down in the Tradition.[57] In that case ancient images would fill the role of prototypes for artistic production, while the whole series of icons of Christ will have Christ as their one, transcendent paradigm.

We shall leave it at that, since this is a major topic that goes beyond the limits of the present book, and return to the topic of relation.

Although Theodore mainly speaks of related things and not relation as such, he seems to have a notion of what relation is in the more abstract sense. The relation as such is held to be 'an intermediate term', to borrow a saying from Porphyry. This intermediate term is that condition in which the two relatives are related meaningfully to one another, viz. because of *likeness*. In his commentary on the *Categories* Porphyry says:

> The relation (ἡ σχέσις) is like an intermediate term (μέσον) between the subjects of the relation, in virtue of which the relative terms come to exist: they acquire a property over and above those of their subjects precisely in that consideration of them reveals a certain sort of connection between them, in virtue of which they are called by the names of the relative terms.[58]

[55] Maguire (1996), 16–47.

[56] Cf. Maguire (1996), ch. 2, where he treats these 'categories' in a quite illuminating way.

[57] Maguire (1996), 11.

[58] Porphyry, *On Aristotle Categories* (2014), 134, CAG 4.1, 125.

Theodore, too mentions the *duality* (δυάδι . . . τοῦ ἀριθμοῦ) between the relatives of prototype and image and then emphasizes the *one likeness* of them both (μία ὁμοίωσις ἀμφοτέροις) in which the relation between them consists.[59]

We saw above that the reception of the icon as a relative might contribute to a liturgical function as a means of contemplation. Contemplation here should first be taken in the perceptive sense commented on above, but such contemplation is probably not limited to what is seen by the eyes. To look attentively on an icon in a contemplative way may turn into an intellectual or spiritual conception of it. There are some further terminological usages in Theodore's text that may shed more light on the liturgical function of the icon. The term ἐμφέρεια is particularly interesting. It turns up, for instance, in the third refutation, section Beta:

> Ἡ εἰκὼν πρὸς τὸ ἀρχέτυπον τὴν ἐμφέρειαν ἔχει, ἀλλ' ἡ μὲν φυσικὴ φυσικῶς· ἡ δὲ τεχνητὴ τεχνητῶς.[60]

Roth and Cattoi translate respectively thus:

> Every image has a relation to its archetype; the natural image has a natural relation, while the artificial image has an artificial relation.
>
> Every image has a relationship (*emphereia*) to its archetype, but the natural image has a natural relationship, whereas the artificial image has an artificial relationship.

In addition to this terminology, in the same section of Beta, we find the term ἀναφορά.[61] Theodore says that if what is shown in the image ἀναφορὰν ἔχει πρὸς τὸ πρωτότυπον (Roth: 'refers to the prototype'), and if whenever there is a prototype there must be an image, then Christ has an artificial image. The most interesting clause, however, is the following: the image ἀναφερομένην πρὸς αὐτὸν διὰ τῆς ὁμοιωτικῆς ἐμφερείας (Roth: 'refers to Him by a relation of likeness'). I think it may be worthwhile reflecting on how the terms *emphereia* and *anaphora* should be understood in this context.

Emphereia may mean likeness, but it is rather unlikely that it means that in this context.[62] The verb (ἐμφέρω) means 'to bear' or 'bring in'.

[59] *Antirrheticus* 3 Delta 1, PG 99: 428c–d.
[60] *Antirrheticus* 3 Beta 2, PG 99: 417a.
[61] *Antirrheticus* 3 Beta 4, PG 99: 417d.
[62] If it should mean likeness here, the clause ἀναφερομένην πρὸς αὐτὸν διὰ τῆς ὁμοιωτικῆς ἐμφερείας would seem quite strange.

In the passive it means 'to be borne' or 'carried in'. Theodore's use of the noun is connected with the idea of a relation of an image to (πρός) its prototype and may suggest that what is shown in the image either (a) conveys a 'bringing' of the *beholder* to the prototype or (b) that the *image* itself 'is brought to' the prototype or 'is carried towards' the prototype. To my knowledge, there are no English nouns that express this neatly, but even so this might be semantically what Theodore has in mind. The term ἡ ὁμοιωτικὴ ἐμφέρεια may then be paraphrased in two alternative ways: (a') what is shown in the image conveys a bringing of the *beholder* to the prototype by means of the likeness the image already has with this prototype, or (b') what is shown in the image is in effect a bringing of the *icon* to the prototype because of the likeness it already has with it. There seem to be two possibilities here, either the 'bringing' is of the beholder or it is of the image. This impression is strengthened by the introduction of the noun *anaphora* and the participle *anapheromene*. Quite generally the word *anaphora* means, for instance, a rising or ascent, or a carrying back of something to a standard. The participle may mean bringing up, raising up, or even offering. However, this terminology has a liturgical ring to it as well. We shall come back to that shortly. Taking into consideration the two possibilities commented on above, we may try to paraphrase the clause ἀναφερομένην πρὸς αὐτὸν διὰ τῆς ὁμοιωτικῆς ἐμφερείας as follows: (1) the image offers or raises the beholder to Christ because of the likeness that brings the beholder to Him; (2) the image somehow offers or raises itself to Him because of the likeness that carries it to Him. These sayings could be meant in an epistemological or an ontological sense, or both. The *epistemological* point (for (1)) would suggest the function of the icon for the beholder: seeing the icon of Christ makes it possible to be carried towards Him (to be 'offered' to Him) by the power of the relationship the image has with Him. Because of the likeness, the icon brings the faithful to Christ Himself. *Ontologically* it would be the image itself *qua* relative that is brought to the prototype.

This interpretation is perhaps a little speculative. The complex terminology, however, invites careful consideration. Since Theodore connects the topic of veneration with the dynamics of relation, it would not be beyond a reasonable interpretation to suggest the above possibilities. We should take notice of the term *anaphora*. It would be known to every participant in the liturgy that the Eucharistic Prayer is introduced with the words Στῶμεν καλῶς· στῶμεν μετὰ φόβου· πρόσχωμεν τὴν ἁγίαν ἀναφορὰν ἐν εἰρήνῃ προσφέρειν ('Let us be upright, let us stand with fear, let us pay heed to present the holy offering

(*anaphora*) in peace'). The term could then be associated with the liturgical offering. The image, in the capacity of being a relative, so to say, conveys an offering to Christ. Epistemologically speaking, this may support an attitude of veneration in front of the image, if the beholder partakes of this 'offering' in a contemplative or prayerful attitude.

HONOUR PASSES FROM IMAGE TO PROTOTYPE

The doctrines and the terminologies we have investigated above are important for a particular argument about the respect paid to the image. Since the image has a particular relation to the prototype, one may argue that honouring the image is honouring the prototype. Veneration, honour, and adoration are, of course, due to the prototype and Theodore says that 'the derivation is not separated from the glory of the prototype, as the shadow is not [separated] from light'.[63] The background for this saying is the famous dictum from St Basil that is repeated over and over again by those who defend icons:[64] 'the honour (*τιμὴ*) given to the image passes over to the prototype' (*ἡ τῆς εἰκόνος τιμὴ ἐπὶ τὸ πρωτότυπον διαβαίνει*). The context of this saying is the Anomoean controversy and has to do with the relation between the Father and the Son in Basil's Trinitarian theology.[65] According to Basil, the Son is the (natural) image of the Father and this relation is illustrated by referring to the emperor and the image of the emperor. The honour offered to the image of the emperor passes over to the emperor and the honour offered to the Son passes over to the Father: the glory is not divided. This illustration is interesting as it is not only relevant for the human attitude towards *images of power*, something that has to do with a rather common experience in a lot of cultures, but it also serves as a point of departure for some philosophical reflections on the use of names.[66]

[63] *Antirrheticus* 1.8, PG 99: 337b (my translation).

[64] *Liber de Spiritu Sancto* 18.45, PG 32: 149c.

[65] For the term Anomoean controversy, cf. Tollefsen (2012), 34. The Anomoeans or Neo-Arians contested the doctrine that the Son is consubstantial with the Father, rather they claimed that He is 'unlike' (*ἀνόμοιος*) the Father.

[66] Bevan (2014), 130, criticizes the iconophiles for their 'misapplication' of Basil's text, which obviously has a theological purpose. However, I disagree with Bevan, since Basil as a matter of fact uses the emperor and his image as an analogy, and this can only work as an analogy for a theological case because of the particular relationship between the emperor

We shall first try to shed some light on the attitude towards images of power. In our times this term itself has a certain negative ring to it.[67] Historically this is an important aspect of human life in different kinds of societies. It still exists in our own day, and in rather civilized forms. The topic, however, is large, and we have to restrict it to our present purposes. Theodore's point, which he takes from Basil, is that there is a definite relationship between the image of the emperor and the emperor: 'we speak of the emperor and the emperor's image and not of two emperors'.[68] He continues with saying that the power is not divided, nor the glory fragmented, and the honour offered to the image passes over to the prototype. In *Antirrheticus* 2, Theodore quotes a section from Basil's *Homily* 24, which is rather interesting.[69] Basil says that if someone looks at the image of the emperor in the public square and calls it 'emperor', he does not for that matter acknowledge two emperors, and he finds it quite normal to say of the image that 'this is the emperor'. We shall return to this manner of speaking below. Theodore also presents an interesting quotation from a theologian who we know as 'pseudo-Basil'.[70] He says that the artificial image that is formed after its prototype brings the likeness of the prototype into matter by means of the artist's thinking and the impress of his hands. Each artisan takes matter, looks at the prototype, receives the contemplated *typos*, and impresses it like a seal on to its matter. This description of the process of making is almost Aristotelian: the artisan's thinking of or contemplation of the paradigm is the formal cause, the use of his hands is the source of movement or the efficient cause, the stuff used for the making is the material cause, and the final cause is the artificial icon.

Theodore offers in addition to Basil a couple of other quotations to the same effect. The first is from St Athanasius *Contra Arianos* and deserves to be quoted in full:

> In the image of the emperor are his appearance and form (τὸ εἶδος καὶ ἡ μορφή), and in the emperor is the appearance that is in the image. The likeness (ὁμοιότης) in the image of the emperor is exactly like [the

and his image. In short, Basil actually says something interesting about images in this text. What he says at least witnesses to his own understanding of such a relationship.

[67] We may think of the cult of images of Stalin and other dictators.

[68] *Antirrheticus* 1.8, PG 99: 337c–d.

[69] *Antirrheticus* 2.11, PG 99: 357c, cf. Basil, *Homily* 24, PG 31: 608a.

[70] *Antirrheticus* 2.11, PG 99: 357d, cf. pseudo-Basil, *Adversus Eunomium* 5, PG 29: 724b–c. According to Quasten (1994), vol. 3, this is probably from Didymus the Blind.

> emperor], so that whoever looks at the image sees the emperor in it; and again whoever sees the emperor recognizes that it is he who is in the image. Because the likeness is not differing, to the one who wishes to see the emperor after seeing the image, the image may say: I and the emperor are one, for I am in him and he is in me. And whatever you have seen in me, you see in him; whatever you see in him, this you see in me.[71]

Theodore also quotes St Cyril of Alexandria to make exactly the same point.[72] The most interesting part of this quotation is the following:[73] 'For the painting fully conveys his [i.e. the emperor's] appearance, and the appearance of the painting is preserved fully in him' (*τὸ γὰρ εἶδος τὸ ἐκείνου πάντως φορεῖ ἡ γραφή, καὶ τὸ τῆς γραφῆς εἶδος ἐν ἐκείνῳ πάντως σώζεται*).

There are several things of interest here. First we should note the terminology of *appearance*. This should be compared with what has been established above: the appearance should not be understood simply as a piecing together of different sense impressions, memories, and thoughts, but as a certain *whole*. The emperor's appearance is a whole that is distinctly the emperor, and his delineation in the image lets this appearance appear. Secondly, to see the image is like seeing the emperor. There are certain images that induce an emotional or mental response of a particular kind. The image of the emperor is the representation of the Ruler, the one who wields supreme power. It is therefore executed in a certain way and displayed in accordance with a certain ritual that promotes the feeling of awe. The natural response in front of the image is that *this is the venerable emperor*. One could, of course, say that this is an *image* of the emperor, but it is still encountered as if it gives the spectator the immediate appearance of the emperor himself.

This could be illustrated also from modern examples. If, for instance, one showed a foreigner the image of the queen of England or the king of Norway, one would naturally say 'this is the queen' and 'this is the king'. A similar example could illustrate the relation between the types of the cross and the true cross itself. If one points to a flag—which would be one among thousands of particular items of its kind—one would say 'this is the Union Jack' or 'this is the Norwegian flag'. The flag itself (as such) differs from the true cross since it is something

[71] *Antirrheticus* 2.13, PG 99: 360a–b. Cf. Athanasius, *Oratio III contra Arianos* (2000), 311.

[72] *Antirrheticus* 2.18, PG 99: 364a–b.

[73] The quotation is from Cyril, *Thesaurus*, PG 75: 185a. Theodore's quotation only deviates slightly from Cyril's text.

similar to a Platonic Form: it is not one of the thousands of flags that is the Flag, but even so every singular is somehow (an instance of) this paradigmatic Flag. The true cross, on the other hand, was an item in the world of time and place, but all copies are somehow the cross as well. It is also reasonable to say, as the authors of the ancient texts put it, that the power and glory is not fragmented, and if one pays honour to the image (of the royal person) or to the flag, one intends to honour the royal person herself (or himself) and the Flag as one single powerful idea. It is likewise with the cross.

Theodore sees these mental mechanisms at work, and in his *Letter* 301 he gives a clear expression of it:

And listen to the great Basil: 'Let Christ, the judge of the contests, be engraved in the image.' For he did not say 'let the image of Christ, the judge of the contests, be engraved', but 'let Christ'. And listen to Gregory of Nyssa, 'Isaac is at hand', calling the image of Isaac 'Isaac'. Listen to Chrysostom: 'I saw the angel in the icon', for he did not see an image of the angel, but he saw the angel. For the prototype appears in the image like the life-giving cross [appears] in the type of the cross, according as the one is inseparable from the other in veneration. Because of this the image has the name of the prototype. So the type of the cross is called cross.[74]

ἄκουε καὶ τοῦ Μεγάλου Βασιλείου· ἐγγραφέσθω τῷ πίνακι καὶ ὁ τῶν παλαισμάτων ἀγωνοθέτης Χριστός. μὴ γὰρ εἶπεν, ἐγγραφέσθω ἡ εἰκὼν τοῦ παλαισμάτων ἀγωνοθέτου Χριστοῦ, ἀλλὰ, Χριστός. ἄκουε καὶ Γρηγορίου τοῦ Νυσσαέως, πρόκειται Ἰσαάκ, τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ Ἰσαὰκ Ἰσαὰκ ὀνομάσαντος. ἄκουε τοῦ Χρυσοστόμου· εἶδον ἄγγελον ἐν εἰκόνι· μὴ γὰρ ἀγγέλου εἰκόνα ἔφη ἐν εἰκόνι ἰδεῖν, ἀλλὰ ἄγγελον. ἐν γὰρ τῇ εἰκόνι τὸ ἀρχέτυπον ἐκφαίνεται ὡς ἐν τῷ τύπῳ τοῦ σταυροῦ ὁ ζωοποιὸς σταυρός, καθὸ καὶ ἀχώριστόν ἐστι θάτερον θατέρου τῇ προσκυνήσει. διὰ τοῦτο καὶ τὴν κλῆσιν τοῦ πρωτοτύπου ἔχει τὸ εἰκόνισμα· σταυρὸς γὰρ ὁ τύπος τοῦ σταυροῦ κέκληται.

In the context of arguments for the icon, the point would be that to see the icon of Christ is to see the appearance of Christ in the material delineation, and from this it naturally follows that one would say 'This is Christ'. As we have seen above, the image, since it is a relative, brings to or uplifts towards its prototype, viz. Christ Himself. The icon is

[74] Theodori Studitae, *Epistulae*, ed. Fatouros (1991), pt 2, letter 301, p. 442.

further displayed within a certain context in such a way that it induces awe and is formative of an attitude of proper veneration. The use of the terminology of *anaphora* strengthens the sense of the religious meaning of the icon. However, one might suspect that this is not just an observation in the psychology of certain types of behaviour within certain contexts, it is also a statement of a conviction, viz. that images ontologically have a kind of representational power as shown above. There is, of course, no need to follow Kitzinger and interpret Theodore's doctrine as an expression of a belief in the *magical powers* of the image as if the distinction between image and the person represented were to some extent obliterated.[75] The distinction is somehow diminished since the image by means of the likeness has a tendency to be absorbed into the prototype. However, the 'representational power' could be due to an acknowledged ontological fact that there is something going on between the image and the prototype that *relates* the first to the second. If there is any magic at work here, it will be the dry 'magic' of the logical force of relation.

HOMONYMY AND SYNONYMY

The relatedness of image to prototype legitimizes certain ways of speaking about prototype and image that belong to the topic of homonymy and synonymy. We investigated these philosophical notions in Chapter 1. In *Antirrheticus* 3 Theodore says:

> Insofar as the image resembles the prototype, it shares its whole veneration on the basis of resemblance, not bringing into veneration the material in which it appears; for this is the nature of the image, to be identified according to likeness with the prototype, but to differ according to the principle of its essence. For this reason the image has homonymy with the prototype. But if it were wholly similar, what we have said has collapsed, and the image is simply the prototype. However, it resembles the prototype in its whole likeness, but not in its nature. Therefore both have one whole veneration on the basis of resemblance.[76]

[75] Kitzinger (1954), 100–1.
[76] *Antirrheticus* 3 Delta 6, PG 99: 429d–432a (Roth's translation).

Ἡ εἰκὼν τοῦ πρωτοτύπου καθὸ ἐμφερὴς, κατὰ τοῦτο καὶ κοινωνοῦσά ἐστι τῆς ὅλης ὁμοιωτικῆς αὐτῷ προσκυνήσεως· οὐ προσλαμβάνουσα τὴν ὕλην ἐφ' [ἣν] δέδεικται εἰς προσκύνησιν· τοῦτο γὰρ φύσις εἰκόνος, ταυτίζεσθαι μὲν κατὰ τὴν ὁμοίωσιν τοῦ πρωτοτύπου, διαφορεῖσθαι δὲ κατὰ τὸν τῆς οὐσίας λόγον, ἐφ' ᾧ καὶ ἡ ὁμωνυμία. Εἰ δὲ καθόλου ἐοικυῖα εἴη, ἀποπέπτωκε τοῦθ' ὅπερ λέγεται καὶ ἔστι λοιπὸν πρωτότυπον. Ἀλλὰ μὴν ἐμφερής ἐστι τῇ ὁλικῇ ὁμοιώσει, ἀλλὰ οὐ τῇ φύσει, τῷ πρωτοτύπῳ. Καὶ ὅλη ἄρα καὶ μία ἡ ἐπ' ἀμφοῖν ὁμοιωτικὴ προσκύνησις.

Since the image is related to the prototype in the way we elucidated above, the image has homonymy with the prototype. We commented on *Antirrheticus* 1.8 and 2.16–17 above.[77] We return now to a closer examination of the last text. First, Christ and His image are homonyms since the name Christ may be predicated on Christ 'properly' and on the image of Christ even if 'not properly'. In short we apply the same name, but the two entities are defined differently; in the first refutation Theodore says we may say that the icon is both *Christ* and *of Christ* (*καὶ Χριστὸν καὶ Χριστοῦ*).[78] It is *Christ* because of homonymy, but (an image) *of Christ* because it is a relative. Further, what is most interesting, one may predicate both the name and the sayings (definite descriptions) concerning Christ synonymously on Christ Himself, while the name and the sayings may be predicated homonymously on the icon. The same is true concerning the cross.

Christ is called 'Christ', and among His titles are Lord of glory, power of God, wisdom of God, son of man, etc.[79] Likewise the icon may be called by these titles: this is the Wisdom of God, this is the Lord of Glory, etc. Theodore further says that Christ may say about Himself 'I am the light of the world', 'to me every knee shall bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth', 'I am the life and the resurrection', etc., and these same things the icon may say about itself by its inscription.[80] In short, as we saw in Chapter 1, names, terms, and definite descriptions applied synonymously and properly to Christ may be said homonymously of the image of Christ. In several places Theodore emphasizes that even if image and prototype are bound together so

[77] Homonymy is alluded to in *Antirrheticus* 1.8, PG 99: 337b, but it is in *Antirrheticus* 2.16–17, PG 99: 360d–361d, that the topic is developed. Cf. also *Antirrheticus* 3 Delta 6, PG 99: 429d–432a. Parry (1996), ch. 6, 52–63.

[78] *Antirrheticus* 1.11, PG 99: 341c.

[79] 1 Cor. 2:8 and 1:24. Son of man is used in several places in the Gospels, for example in Matthew 16:27, Luke 19:10, John 6:62.

[80] John 8:12; cf. Romans 14:11 and Philippians 2:10; John 11:25.

that such a linguistic usage is possible, they *differ according to nature*, and this refers to the materiality of the object, something we shall return to discuss in the next chapter.

The relation between image and prototype is based on the appearance of the hypostasis of Christ as a likeness delineated in the image. Theodore's teaching on the function of the hypostasis in the relation between the prototype and image seems to be misunderstood by Damian and Metallidis.[81] Damian says that Theodore insists on the concept of hypostasis, 'which is common to Christ and to the icon'. Metallidis says that 'Theodore elaborated the theology of the one hypostasis in Christ and his icon, expressed in the relative connection between them'. He also talks of the 'one hypostasis in Christ and his icon'. This cannot be correct. There is no common hypostasis. If there was, one could charge Theodore with animism. Damian builds his claim on *Letter* 57 (in Fatouros' edition):

The natural image is one thing and the imitative one is another, the first has no natural difference from its cause, but is hypostatically different, like the Son compared with the Father (for the hypostasis of the Son is one and the hypostasis of the Father is another, while it is evident that their nature is one), the other [kind of image] conversely has natural difference, but not hypostatical, just as the icon of Christ compared with Christ, for the nature of the material painting is one thing, and is something other than the natures of Christ, while the hypostasis is not, rather it is one and the same hypostasis of Christ and this is inscribed (*γεγραμμένη*) in the icon, as the same divine Basil again says, 'now, what in the one case the image is by reason of imitation, that in the other case the Son is by nature; and as in works of art the likeness (*ὁμοίωσις*) is dependent on the form, similarly in the case of the divine and uncompounded nature the union consists in the communion of the Godhead'.[82]

Ἄλλο δὲ φυσικὴ εἰκὼν καὶ ἄλλο μιμητική, ἡ μὲν οὐ φυσικὴν διαφορὰν ἔχουσα πρὸς τὸ αἴτιον, ἀλλ' ὑποστατικήν, ὡς ὁ Υἱὸς πρὸς τὸν Πατέρα (ἄλλη γὰρ ὑπόστασις τοῦ Υἱοῦ καὶ ἑτέρα τοῦ Πατρός, μία δὲ φύσις δῆλον ὅτι), ἡ δὲ τὸ ἀνάπαλιν, φυσικὴν διαφορὰν ἔχουσα, ἀλλ' οὐχ ὑποστατικήν, ὡς ἡ εἰκὼν τοῦ Χριστοῦ πρὸς τὸν Χριστόν· ἄλλη μὲν γὰρ φύσις ὑλογραφίας καὶ ἕτεραι τοῦ Χριστοῦ, οὐκ ἄλλη δὲ ὑπόστασις, ἀλλὰ μία καὶ ἡ αὐτὴ τοῦ Χριστοῦ κἀν τῇ εἰκόνι γεγραμμένη, τοῦ αὐτοῦ θείου

[81] Damian (1993), 245; Metallidis (2002), 191–3.
[82] Theodori Studitae, *Epistulae*, ed. Fatouros (1991), pt 1, letter 57, pp. 33–43.

Βασιλείου πάλιν λέγοντος· ὃ οὖν ἐστιν ἐνταῦθα μιμητικῶς ἡ εἰκών, τοῦτο ἐκεῖ φυσικῶς ὁ Υἱός· καὶ ὥσπερ ἐπὶ τῶν τεχνητῶν κατὰ τὴν μορφὴν ἡ ὁμοίωσις, οὕτως ἐπὶ τῆς θείας καὶ ἀσυνθέτου φύσεως τῇ κοινωνίᾳ τῆς θεότητος ἡ ἕνωσις.

A first impression is that Theodore says the hypostasis is the same, but even if that is the case, we should ask what it means. It is not to be expected that he would teach one thing in his treatises and something quite different and highly problematical in his letters. The key, as a matter of fact, is found in the quotation itself. He says 'it is one and the same hypostasis of Christ' that is *inscribed* in the icon, and that does not mean that the hypostasis is the same. Rather the sameness should be qualified and this is what Theodore does in the citation from St Basil: the clue is the role played by *imitation*, and that there is a *likeness* in the image that depends on the form (*ἡ μορφή*) of the prototype. This interpretation is not based on any hidden or intricate message in the letter, rather it is quite obvious and it accords well with the results gathered from Theodore's treatises above. It is possible that such a nuanced doctrine is also what Damian and Metallidis have in mind, but the way they actually present Theodore's doctrine does not seem to be correct. A similar idea turns up in Parry:[83] 'Ultimately for Theodore, however, the identity between image and its prototype is an hypostatic one.' However, I am quite sure that Parry is aware of the nuances.

What is presented above brings us close to the fulfilment of Theodore's defence of the icon as indeed more than a simple defence. What he presents is a theory of images as representational or as portraits. He describes two things as related, viz. the prototype and the icon. The medium of the relation is, obviously, the likeness: it is because of the likeness that they are related. However, if we keep in mind the content of the present study, we should also bring the idea of the appearance (*εἶδος*) or the countenance (*ὄψις*) into the picture. Then two facts should be stated concerning the relation: (1) the appearance of Christ Himself (as paradigm) is transferred into the *likeness* of the appearance in the image by the artisan.[84] (2) For the spectator the *likeness* of the appearance of Christ in the image is referred back to the appearance of Christ Himself as the paradigm. This brings us quite close to a theory of a true image. It is now time to focus on this topic.

[83] Parry (1996), 58–9.

[84] Cf. the quotation from pseudo-Basil commented on above, in *Antirrheticus* 2.11, PG 99: 357d.

4

True Image or Idol of Deceit

TRUE IMAGE

We have several times touched upon the concept of true image that was central to the iconoclast argument. This concept played an important role both in the so-called *Peuseis* (*Πεύσεις*) of Constantine V and in the Definition of the iconoclast council of 754.[1] According to Gero, the first *Peusis* was devoted to the definition of what constitutes a true image.[2] Every image is a derivation from a prototype, and if it is a proper (*καλῶς*) image, it is of the same essence (*ὁμοούσιον*) with that of which it is an image.[3] This appears at first sight rather strange. Gero finds the background in New Testament image speculation 'as assimilated into fourth-century Nicene Trinitarian doctrine'.[4] In New Testament image speculation Christ is the image of the Father (cf. Col 1:15), conceived by the church fathers as the *natural* image. However, Constantine extends this to every image, and therewith the problems arise. The immediate application is clear enough. It culminates in the Christological dilemma we have discussed in Chapter 2. To put it in Gero's words: 'Christ has one prosopon, which is compounded of a human and a divine nature. This prosopon cannot be depicted because the humanity cannot be separated for the purpose of delineation, and the divine nature cannot be circumscribed or depicted. Hence an image of

[1] Cf. Ostrogorsky (1964), 7–45; Gero (1977), 37–52; Brubaker and Haldon (2011), 179–83.

[2] Gero (1977), 39–45.

[3] Ostrogorsky (1964), 8, from fragment 1: *πᾶσα εἰκὼν παράγωγος πρωτοτύπου τινὸς γνωρίζεσθαι*. Fragment 2: *καὶ εἰ καλῶς, ὁμοούσιον αὐτὴν εἶναι τοῦ εἰκονιζομένου*. It is interesting that Theodore takes up this terminology of derivation in *Antirrheticus* 1.8, PG 99: 337b–c and 2.6, 356b.

[4] Gero (1977), 40.

the theandric Christ is a theological impossibility.'[5] There is reason to believe that Constantine's point simply is that an image of Christ cannot express His true divine nature, a point of view that is neither naïve nor an expression of a strange, magical outlook. It rather represents a real challenge for the defenders of this particular kind of religious art.

In the introduction to the second *Antirrheticus* Theodore complains that the iconoclasts at one time blasphemously called the icon an idol of deceit, while at another time they said it serves education and recollection, but is not for veneration. As we have seen in the Introduction, one of the main charges of the iconoclast council of 754 was that the icon is an idol. Even if the so-called second iconoclasm did not stress the idolatrous character of the icon to the same degree as the first iconoclasm, the second iconoclast council of 815 adhered to all the decisions of the council of 754. According to the Definition of this council of 754, the church that worshipped God 'in spirit and truth' (John 4:24) was deceived by the devil who reintroduced idolatry unnoticeably and convincingly by his subtleties. Theodore addresses the challenges of the accusation of idolatry and of the Mosaic commandment particularly in the first *Antirrheticus*.[6] The topic of veneration turns up naturally in the wake of this.

The Old Testament prohibition against images from the Decalogue is well known. Theodore puts the words in the mouth of his iconoclast opponent in the first refutation:

> You shall not make for yourself an idol or likeness of anything, whatever is in heaven above and whatever is in the earth beneath and whatever is in the waters beneath the earth. You shall not do obeisance to them, nor are you to serve them, for I am the Lord your God, a jealous god…[7]

Theodore of course acknowledges this fully and adds that there is no designation, no likeness, no circumscription, and no definition of God (*οὗ οὐκ ἔστι σημασία, οὐχ ὁμοίωσις, οὐ περιγραφὴ, οὐ περιορισμὸς*).[8]

[5] Gero (1977), 45.

[6] Cf. *Antirrheticus* 1.2, 5–6, 16, PG 99: 329b–332a, 333b–336b, 345c–348b. The problems are alluded to in other paragraphs as well.

[7] *Antirrheticus* 1.5, PG 99: 333b. Exod. 20:4–5 quoted from Pietersma and Wright (2007), *A New English Translation of the Septuagint*, Oxford University Press.

[8] *Antirrheticus* 1.5, PG 99: 333c. Cf. Deut. 4:15–19: 'And guard your souls closely, because you did not notice a likeness (*ὁμοίωμα*) on the day the Lord spoke to you at Choreb in the mountain in the midst of fire. Do not act lawlessly and make for yourselves an engraved likeness, any kind of icon (*εἰκόνα*)—a likeness of male or female,

Therefore God could not and should not be presented in an image (εἰκών) as if he had one. A portrait of God would be impossible, and even symbolic art might be problematic. A presentation would belie the nature of the divinity that transcends earthly and created forms and categories. To make an image would be to falsify the Godhead into something it is not. It would definitely amount to making an idol of deceit. Theodore clearly conceives the Old Testament *rationale* behind the prohibitions against images.[9] God is understood apophatically before the Incarnation and the prohibitions are, therefore, to the point.

In order to make an image of the divinity, the minimum requirement would be that it presents itself in such a way that artificial presentation could be possible. The divinity should have to condescend to conditions that could be represented, and one of the basic tenets of Christianity is that God has condescended to earthly conditions. We have seen above how Theodore has argued that in His Incarnation Christ appears in a concretely existing and circumscribed humanity that in principle might be the prototype of an image.

According to the iconoclasts, a true image should have to give expression to the essence of the subject, but, according to the argument, an icon obviously fails in this. If one on these conditions still wants to make an icon, then one commits an act of idolatry, since the image fails in the same way as the images prohibited in the Old Testament: it falsifies the divinity, even the incarnate divinity. As a counter-example it could be claimed that the only true 'image' is the Eucharist.[10]

What, then, has Constantine to say about the Eucharist? He presents his views in the second *Peusis*.[11] Gero has made a separate study of the Eucharistic argument in order to find out whether it contains innovations or is in accordance with tradition.[12] Gero summarizes Constantine's views with reference to Ostrogorsky's collection of the

a likeness of any animal of those that are on the earth, a likeness of any winged bird that flies under the sky, a likeness of any reptile that creeps on the ground, a likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth. And do not, when you look up to the sky and see the sun and moon and the stars, even any ornament of the sky, be led astray and do obeisance to them and serve them (προσκυνήσῃς αὐτοῖς καὶ λατρεύσῃς αὐτοῖς)—those things that the Lord your God has allotted to all the nations beneath the sky.' Quoted from Pietersma and Wright (2007). The Greek terms are inserted by me.

[9] Cf. *Antirrheticus* 1.2, PG 99: 329b–332a.

[10] Gero (1977) seems to interpret the problem in a similar way, cf. Gero (1977), 10 n. 40.

[11] Cf. Ostrogorsky (1964), 10–11; Gero (1975); Gero (1977), 45–7.

[12] Gero (1975), 4–22.

fragments:[13] the Eucharist can be regarded as an image of His body, as the 'form of His body'—whatever that means. Gero says further: 'the bread we receive is an image of His body, it depicts His flesh, and it is a *typos* of His body'. The most telling statement, however, is that bread and wine are transferred 'by means of the sacerdotal consecration… from the domain of the "hand-made" (*τὸ χειροποίητον*) to that of "made without hands" (*τὸ ἀχειροποίητον*)'.

Whatever the intention of the emperor's *Peuseis*, the Definition from the council of 754 does not pick up all the points put forward. It does not, for instance, state the claim that a true image should be *homoousios* with the original. On the other hand, the council's Christological dilemma about the true or falsified image of Christ is obviously a version of a similar kind of thinking. The section on the Eucharist in the Definition contains several interesting points.[14] The Eucharist is the true icon of Christ. It is a type depicting Christ's Incarnation, the image of His life-giving body, made properly and honourably. Instead of Constantine's words that the elements are brought from the 'hand-made' to the 'made without hands', the Definition states that the priest's offering, by the descent of the Holy Spirit, mediates the passage from the common to the holy. It is also interesting to note that the Eucharist, according to the Definition, is not shaped in the form of man, to avoid the introduction of idolatry.[15]

The ecumenical council of 787 denounces the claim that the Eucharist is an image of Christ's body.[16] However, the council does not mention the statements in the iconoclast Definition that are obviously orthodox, for example what was mentioned above about the offering. Gero has gathered material to show that to 'characterize the eucharist as the image of the body of Christ was indeed a genuine, though by no means a dominant strand in patristic thinking about the mystery of the eucharist', and he seems to be right.[17]

[13] Gero (1975), 5.

[14] Mansi xiii, 261d–264c; Krannich et al. (2002), 44 and 46; Hennephof (1969), 67–8; translated in Krannich et al. (2002), 45 and 47; Gero (1977), 76–7; Sahas (1988), 92–4.

[15] Here I should remark that I disagree with the way Gero (1977), 76, translates the term *σεβόμενοι* in the first sentence of the fragment, viz. as 'those who[…worship'. It does not harmonize with the expressed desire to avoid idolatry. I would have preferred 'those who offer reverence' or something like it so that the definition does not look inconsistent.

[16] Mansi xiii, 264e–265b, translation in Sahas (1988), 94–5.

[17] Gero (1975), 18.

How does Theodore react to these iconoclast ideas about the Eucharist? First he sees the image doctrine as a concession to the notion of the circumscription of Christ's body.[18] Then he attacks the notion of the Eucharist as an image, which he interprets in a biased way, and states that according to church doctrine it is *truth* or *reality* (ἀλήθεια). However, the Eucharistic elements do not play any prominent role in his attack on iconoclast thought. There is, on the other hand, an aspect of the mystery of the Eucharist as such that becomes prominent in Theodore's teaching. As a matter of fact he grasps a notion that is common in Byzantine liturgical life, viz. the element of recollection. We shall return to this in the section 'Memory, Contemplation, and Veneration' below.

Theodore would probably claim that his own Christological arguments, together with his doctrine of the icon as a relative, answer the iconoclast accusations about the icon as a falsified image and an idol. We shall further see how he strengthens his own position with what he has to say about the material substance of images and how images are related to memory and recollection.

MATTER

Theodore defends the possibility of making a material image of the incarnate God. Material images are things or substances—to put it in a more philosophical language. They are, more precisely, artefacts in the sense of religious artefacts. In our discussion of Theodore's Christology in Chapter 2 we saw how he tries to identify the incarnate God as a possible subject of painting. In the discussion of the prototype–image constellation in Chapter 3 we saw how he considers the properties of the image in relation to the prototype. In the present section we shall investigate what Theodore has to say about the icon as a material substance.

The iconoclast council of 754 refers to 'the unlawful art of the painters' and states that it is a pagan custom to use 'worthless and dead matter' in the service of God and the saints.[19] Theodore refers as an iconoclast

[18] *Antirrheticus* 1.10, PG 99: 340b; cf. Gero (1975), 8.

[19] Mansi xiii, 240c, 227d; Krannich et al. (2002), 38, 50; Hennephof (1969), 65, 70; translation in Krannich et al. (2002), 39, 51; Gero (1977), 73, 80; Sahas (1988), 75, 105.

opinion the view that it is a degradation and a humiliation to depict Christ in matter.[20] Against this he claims that the making of images is a 'divine action':[21] 'The fact that man is made in the image and likeness of God shows that the work of iconography is a divine action' (*Τὸ κατ' εἰκόνα θεοῦ καὶ ὁμοίωσιν πεποιῆσθαι τὸν ἄνθρωπον, δείκνυσι θεῖόν τι χρῆμα ὑπάρχειν τὸ τῆς εἰκονουργίας εἶδος*). Theodore acknowledges, almost in a way similar to Dionysius the Areopagite, that human beings living a bodily life in a world of place and time need material symbols to raise the intellect towards God. Even the materials themselves are elevated when they serve this divine purpose. On the other hand, the materials seem to have no value as such, their value lies in their potentiality for mediating spiritual truth:

So whether in an image, or in the Gospel, or in the cross, or in any other consecrated object, God is evidently worshipped 'in spirit and in truth', as the materials are exalted by the raising of the mind toward God. The mind does not remain with the materials, because it does not trust in them: that is the error of the idolaters. Through the materials, rather, the mind ascends toward the prototypes: this is the faith of the orthodox.[22]

Καὶ οὕτω κἂν ἐν εἰκόνι, κἂν ἐν Εὐαγγελίῳ, κἂν ἐν σταυρῷ, κἂν ἐπ' ἄλλῳ τινὶ τῶν ἀφιερωθέντων, ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ Θεὸς προσκυνούμενος φαίνεται· ὑπεξαιρουμένων τῶν ὑλῶν διὰ τῆς τοῦ νοῦ ἐπὶ Θεὸν ἀνανήξεως. Οὐ γάρ τοι πρὸς αὐτὰς ἐναποιμένοι ἂν, ὅτι μηδὲ πέποιθεν, ὡς ἡ τῶν εἰδωλολατρούντων πλάνη· δι' αὐτῶν τε ἐπὶ τὰ πρωτότυπα ἄνεισιν, ὡς ἡ τῶν ὀρθοδόξων πίστις.

It is interesting to compare this with a text from the first part of the seventh century written by Leontius of Neapolis and commented on by Barber.[23] Barber concludes that when it comes to the icon, according to Leontius, 'the material is only of value when it has been formed into a recognizable figure within the Christian visual lexicon'. Barber continues: 'Thus an apt form is necessary for the material to become valuable.'[24] This seems to be the common opinion of St John of Damascus and St Theodore as well. However, one might get the impression that John and Theodore differ slightly in their conception of matter. The former says the iconoclasts call matter worthless and accuse them of

[20] *Antirrheticus* I.7, PG 99: 336b.
[21] *Antirrheticus* 3 Beta 5, PG 99: 420a (Roth's translation).
[22] *Antirrheticus* I.13, PG 99: 344d (Roth's translation).
[23] Barber (2002), 17–18.
[24] Barber (2002), 18.

Manichaeism.[25] Matter, he claims, is good, and when the world was made, God saw that His creatures were good (καλά). John further quotes Exodus and lists all the material gifts the people donated to the making of the tabernacle. The idea is clear enough: all kinds of material stuff may be set to the use of mediating divine truth symbolically. Matter is useful, in Barber's words, when it has an apt form. According to John, therefore, matter is honoured (τιμᾶται). He reverences, holds in respect, and venerates it since salvation was wrought through matter, *in casu* the body of the Lord. However, matter in general is *not venerated in itself* (οὐ προσκυνῶ τῇ ὕλῃ) or as God, but because it is filled with divine activity and grace (ὡς θείας ἐνεργείας καὶ χάριτος ἔμπλεως). Matter, like gold, tesserae, pigments, and wood, is venerable because of the potential to be formed into an artefact that may serve as a means for the experience and knowledge of the divine. We shall see below that Theodore is perhaps a bit more restrictive or careful when it comes to defining the usefulness of matter, even if the two thinkers do not differ substantially in this regard.

John distinguishes between the icon as an artefact on the one hand, and the matter it is made of on the other. Theodore makes a similar distinction, but from a slightly different angle. First he distinguishes between the prototype and the image with regard to essence or nature (οὐσία and φύσις). In the first refutation he says:

Christ is one thing and His image is another thing by nature, although they have an identity in the use of the same name. Moreover, when one

[25] *Imag.* 2.13, for the following see *Imag.* 2.13–14, Johannes von Damaskos (1975), 150. I don't think that when he accuses them of calling matter worthless (ἄτιμον) he in any way echoes the formulas of the council of 754, which definitely talked of worthless (ἀδόξῳ) matter. The terminology differs. Brubaker and Haldon (2011), 183–6, argue that John's treatises should be dated anew, but I rather stick to Louth's conclusion in St John of Damascus, *Three Treatises* (2003), 10, that the second treatise is from around 730. There is something I miss in the argument of Brubaker and Haldon. They seem to claim that the first two treatises by John were written about the time of the council of 754. But if that is the case, how should we conceive of the council's critique of John as if he was a well-known opponent of iconoclasm? Cf. Brubaker and Haldon (2011), 188–9 n. 150. It is possible that news travels rather quickly, but is it likely that the authorities in Constantinople would consider a simple monk in Palestine a serious threat at such short notice? There is one more rather strange thing about John's first treatise which makes me wonder how well informed he was or what were the challenges he faced. In *Imag.* 1.19 he says: 'But then they say, Make an image of Christ and of his Mother who gave birth to God, and let that suffice.' It strikes me as difficult to think that the background for this saying is Constantinopolitan iconoclasm from the so-called first iconoclasm. Who are 'they'?

considers the nature of the image, not only would he not say that the thing he sees is Christ, but he would not even say that it is the image of Christ. For it is perhaps wood, or paint, or gold, or silver, or some of the various materials which are mentioned.[26]

ἀλλὰ ἄλλο Χριστὸν, καὶ ἄλλο εἰκόνα Χριστοῦ κατὰ φύσιν· εἰ καὶ ἡ ταυτότης κατὰ τὸ ἀμερὲς τῆς κλήσεως. Καὶ ὅτε μὲν πρὸς τὴν τῆς εἰκόνος φύσιν ἀπίδοι, οὐ Χριστὸν μόνον, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ εἰκόνα Χριστοῦ εἴποι ἂν τὸ ὁρώμενον. Ἔστι γὰρ τυχὸν ξύλον, ἢ χρῶμα, ἢ χρυσὸς, ἢ ἄργυρος, ἤ τι τῶν διαφόρων ὑλῶν ὃ καὶ λέγεται.

In the third refutation he says: 'The latter [i.e. the artificial image], however, while being the same as its archetype in likeness, is distinct from the essence of the prototype, like Christ and His icon.'[27] (*Ἡ δὲ τῇ ὁμοιώσει ταυτιζομένη, ἠλλοτρίωται τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ ἀρχετύπου, ὡς εἰκὼν τοῦ Χριστοῦ πρὸς αὐτὸν δὴ Χριστόν.*) There is another paragraph in the third refutation that is worth quoting:

We speak of relation inasmuch as the copy is in the prototype; one is not separated from the other because of this, except by the difference of essence. Therefore, since the image of Christ is said to have Christ's form in its delineation, it will have one veneration with Christ, and not a different veneration.[28]

Ἡ σχέσις κατὰ τό εἶναι ἐν τῷ πρωτοτύπῳ τὸ παράγωγον εἴρηται· καὶ οὐ διὰ τοῦτο μεμέρισται θατέρου θάτερον, ἢ μόνον παρὰ τὸ τῆς οὐσίας διάφορον. Οὐκοῦν ἐπειδὴ ἔχειν λέγεται ἡ εἰκὼν τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν τῇ οἰκείᾳ διαγραφῇ τὸ εἶδος Χριστοῦ, μία καὶ ἡ προσκύνησις αὐτῆς πρὸς Χριστὸν, καὶ οὐ διάφορος.

These three texts create the same impression: the icon may be analysed into form and matter—to use a conceptual tool from Aristotelian tradition. The formal element is indicated with different words in the three texts. The first text states this by adducing identity with the prototype because *the same name is used*. The second text claims *sameness in likeness*. The third text speaks of the icon having Christ's *form or appearance in its delineation*. What Theodore on the other hand calls the nature or essence of the icon is the subject that remains when this formal element is abstracted. It is this subject that is the

[26] *Antirrheticus* 1.11, PG 99: 341b–c (Roth's translation).
[27] *Antirrheticus* 3 Beta 2, PG 99: 417b (my translation).
[28] *Antirrheticus* 3 Gamma 10, PG 99: 424d (Roth's translation).

material component of the image. The icon may then be considered in two ways, viz. as the *materialized delineated figure* (regulated by the formal element of the 'likeness' of the appearance), or as the *materials* as such in which the delineation is present.

The material 'thing' that is of a different nature or essence from its prototype does not seem to be unqualified matter ('prime matter'), but rather proximate matter like tesserae, pigments, gold, silver, etc. These need to receive an apt form in order to be valuable. In his *Letter* 57, Theodore uses an interesting analogy that is relevant for the present topic:

It seems to me that this is like the example of a mirror; for there too it is as if the face of the beholder is depicted while the likeness (*τὸ ὁμοίωμα*) remains detached from the matter, and if someone thought to greet his own image in the mirror, he wouldn't have embraced the matter, for he did not approach it for its sake, but the likeness of himself depicted in the matter, for which reason he turned to the matter. Of course, when he stands away from the mirror the similitude will disappear at the same time, since it has no share in the matter of the mirror, and the same happens with the matter of the icon, for once the likeness seen within it is effaced—that towards which veneration is addressed—the matter will remain unvenerated, since it will not share anything with the likeness.[29]

καὶ μοι δοκεῖ τῷ ἐν κατόπτρῳ παραδείγματι ἐοικέναι· κἀκεῖ γὰρ οἱονεὶ διαγράφεται τοῦ ὁρῶντος τὸ πρόσωπον καὶ μένει ἔξω τῆς ὕλης τὸ ὁμοίωμα. κἂν δόξειεν ἀσπάσασθαι τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἐκεῖσε εἰκόνα, οὐ τὴν ὕλην προσεπτύξατο, ὅτι μηδὲ δι' αὐτὴν πρόσεισιν, ἀλλὰ τὸ ἐν αὐτῇ ἀπεικονισθὲν αὐτοῦ ὁμοίωμα, δι' ὃ καὶ προσέφυ τῇ ὕλῃ. ἀμέλει μεταστάντος αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἐσόπτρου συναπέστη αὐτῷ ἅμα καὶ τὸ ἴνδαλμα, ὡς μὴ κοινωνοῦν τι τῇ τοῦ ἐσόπτρου ὕλῃ, ὥσπερ οὖν καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς εἰκονικῆς ὕλης, ὅτι ἀφανισθέντος τοῦ ἐν αὐτῇ ὁρωμένου ὁμοιώματος, ἐφ' ᾧ ἡ προσκύνησις, ἔμεινεν ἡ ὕλη ἀπροσκύνητος, ὡς μηδὲν κοινωνοῦσα τῷ ὁμοιώματι.

The term translated as likeness in this text is *ὁμοίωμα*. It could be translated as image as well, but likeness is preferred since it fits into the context of the argument and because we have seen the importance of the terminology of *ὁμοίωσις* in Theodore. The present text confirms

[29] Theodori Studitae, *Epistulae*, ed. Fatouros (1991), pt 1, letter 57, pp. 90–101.

the interpretation of the role of the formal element of likeness in the relation between image and prototype given above, and it illustrates the mediating role of likeness with an interesting example. The likeness in the mirror is somehow detached from the matter of the artefact, and it is similar with the icon: if the delineation of the likeness of the appearance of Christ the paradigm is effaced, no likeness will appear in the icon, and that for the sake of which we venerate this item is no longer there. Then matter will remain without veneration. As suggested above, this sounds much like making an Aristotelian distinction between form and matter in this particular 'thing' here. But then we should immediately recognize that at this point the analogy with the mirror is weakened, since to efface the delineation in an icon would mean to scratch away the pigments. While a mirror without mirroring anything at the moment is still a mirror, a wooden board from which colours (to a certain degree) are scratched away is no longer an icon. For this reason we can probably say that for Theodore, when anything is an icon, it is a *whole* of form and matter that is venerable since it opens the way for a direct view of the prototype. The icon *qua* religious artefact is not the form or the matter separately; it is the whole. However, the mind, as we have seen above, does not trust in the materials separately. We will return to a more precise description of how veneration in the strict sense is to be understood in the next section.

MEMORY, CONTEMPLATION, AND VENERATION

The materials in an icon are organized into a figurative delineation that function as a kind of *pointer* or a set of *pointers* towards an original. The icon is an artefact with a well-ordered structure executed in pigments, mosaic tesserae, embroidery, etc. It is related to the prototype in the way we worked out in Chapter 3. The paradigm is, so to say, the *measure* of the delineation. However, the relation of the one to the other has a certain 'semantic' character. Since the prototype has a certain *meaning* this would motivate the need to get it represented, especially in a Christian context. Christianity cannot be reduced to a set of philosophical paragraphs, but depends on the work of a person, and on historical events: the events of salvation history. The particular meaning mentioned above should somehow be available in the image. If not, then the image fails essentially to be an image of its prototype.

If the prototype is absent from the world of sensory experience and if the religiously important events are past, looking at or contemplating the image gives a certain access to the prototype and the event. All of this implies that the image directs the attention of the beholder not to itself, but rather to *that of which it is an image*. The image, as we shall see, has no cult of its own *qua* different from its prototype. The image is not venerated separately from its prototype. It is sanctified by its particular relation—which is accommodated by the 'likeness'—and not in any other way or for any other reason. It could not have a cult of its own since that would set it apart from its proper context. Considered as a separate thing, it has no sense as such. We shall investigate the meaning of the icon further in the present section.

In the introduction to the second refutation Theodore lets his iconoclast say that the icon contains a ἱστορία, i.e. a record or a history, and that it has a certain Logos, a sense or meaning that may be brought forward by interpretation and that sustains recollection (ἐξηγήσεως καὶ ἀναμνήσεως λόγον ἔχουσα).[30] This invites further investigation. Whether or not the saying represents a genuine iconoclast view from after 815, it comes at least close to one of the aspects of the icon dear to the iconophiles, viz. its 'recollective' or 'memorative' dimension or function.

In his third refutation Theodore brings together the two terms ἔνδειξις and ἀναφορά (ἀναφέρομαι) in an interesting way.[31] Ἔνδειξις means an indication or demonstration. Ἀναφορά, as we have seen in Chapter 3, means for instance the reference of a thing to a standard—and we should probably always keep in mind the liturgical connotations. The verb is used in senses like bring, carry up, or rise up. Theodore says that what appears as an indication (ἔνδειξις) in the image has a reference (ἀναφορά) to the prototype, and the reference is by the medium of likeness. We shall discuss this further while trying to remain within the limits of Theodore's doctrines.

Maybe we could use the term *sign* (σημεῖον) for that which is a potential *signifier*. A sign is an actual signifier when it *signifies* (σημαίνει) or refers to the prototype in a way that discloses the meaning, truth, or reality (λόγος, ἀλήθεια) of it in part or as a whole. An image may only be a true image if this condition is fulfilled. We may even talk of a double disclosure, viz. of the image as signifier and of the prototype

[30] *Antirrheticus* 2, Introduction, PG 99: 352c–d.
[31] *Antirrheticus* 3 Beta 4, PG 99: 417d.

as truth. To disclose the image as signifier presupposes some kind of knowledge. We need a certain preconceived knowledge in order to 'read' the image. We shall return to that below. To disclose the prototype means to discover its meaning from the 'reading' of the image. Maybe we should say that the image has *significance* because it contains signs that are potential signifiers, while the prototype should be said to have *meaning*. This perhaps creates the impression of two successive epistemic events temporally speaking: first there is the 'reading' of the image and then comes the understanding of the prototype. However, when it comes to *understanding or experience*, the two merge into one epistemic event: that of the disclosure of the *subject* of the image, and this is the prototype. Even if Theodore does not use this kind of terminology, one might claim that this is his conception of the relation between image and prototype, and this is his doctrine. As said above, what appears as an indication in the image has reference to the prototype.

If the event of understanding is to occur, the beholder must *already* have a previous understanding of the meaning of the prototype. This previous understanding may be more or less of an understanding. Somehow there occurs here a hermeneutical circle. The point can perhaps be illustrated by a well-known Byzantine *ekphrasis*, viz. the homily preached by St Photius in Hagia Sophia on 29 March 867, at the inauguration of the image of the Theotokos with Child.[32] Robert S. Nelson has offered an interesting investigation of this homily against the background of what he calls 'Mango's paradox'.[33] The paradox consists in the following: while Byzantine art, according to modern judgement, strikes one as not naturalistic, or even, in Nelson's words, as 'flat linear, and schematic', the Byzantines themselves 'regarded it as being highly naturalistic'. However, Nelson claims that when the Byzantines described their art as 'like-life' they did not imply anything like 'our aesthetic category of naturalistic, but literally lifelike, that is, living or alive'.[34] However, it is not immediately clear what this should mean.

Parry has some rather interesting remarks that are relevant to this.[35] He takes it for granted that in the defence of images some kind of communion between image and prototype is presupposed. However, as he points out, John of Damascus, the council of 787, and Theodore take

[32] Translated by Mango, *The Homilies of Photius*, Patriarch of Constantinople (1958), 285–96. Greek text in Photii, *Orationes et homiliae*, vol. 2 (1900), 294–308.
[33] Nelson (2000), 143. [34] Nelson (2000), 144. [35] Parry (1996), 26–7.

images to be *lifeless* things. How, then, can they still be considered somehow *lifelike*? Parry refers to a passage from Elias' commentary on Aristotle's *Categories*:

The real man is living substance endowed with sensation whereas the portrayed man is not substance but *symbebekos*, not living but lifeless, not sensing but lacking in such faculty; the latter is called 'alive' in the sense of being a representation of a living and sensing substance.[36]

ὁ γὰρ ἀληθὴς ἄνθρωπος οὐσία ἔμψυχος αἰσθητική, ὁ δὲ γεγραμμένος οὐκ οὐσία ἀλλὰ συμβεβηκός, οὐκ ἔμψυχος ἀλλ' ἄψυχος, οὐκ αἰσθητικὸς ἀλλ' ἀναίσθητος, ἀλλὰ ζῷον λέγεται ὡς εἰκὼν ἐμψύχου αἰσθητικῆς.

I think this quotation suggests a rather reasonable solution. An icon may be experienced as lifelike since it directs attention to a living person and has a tendency to be absorbed in the prototype in the act of veneration. The beholder does not 'see' what a modern beholder outside of this particular Christian tradition sees. We shall follow this up below.

Nelson investigates the background and context for statements of the lifelike character of the icon in optical theory, particularly in what he calls the *ancient extramission theory of vision*.[37] Photius presents his theory thus:

> For surely, having somehow through the outpouring and effluence of the optical rays touched and encompassed the object, it too sends the appearance (*τὸ εἶδος*) of the thing seen on to the mind, letting it be conveyed from there to the memory for the concentration of unfailing knowledge.[38]

Nelson argues that this notion of vision was 'part of a general acceptance of extramission in Byzantium, especially in regard to image theory'.[39] His arguments for this may not be conclusive, but however that may be it seems quite clear that at least Photius holds this kind of doctrine.[40]

[36] Parry's source is Anton (1969), 17. Cf. Elias CAG 18.1, 139.

[37] Nelson (2000), 150.

[38] Mango, *The Homilies of Photius* (1958), 294 (slightly modified); Photii, *Orationes et homiliae*, vol. 2 (1900), 305. Cf. John of Damascus, *Imag.* 1.11, Johannes von Damaskos, ed. Kotter, vol. 3 (1975), 85, lines 16–19.

[39] Nelson (2000), 154.

[40] Theories of emission (from the eyes) and efflux (from objects) were controversial in late antiquity. Cf. Sorabji (2004, vol. 1), 53–8; Alexander of Aphrodisias, *On Aristotle On Sense Perception* (2013), CAG 3.1, 27–31, 32–3, 56, 59–63, 82–7.

Photius thinks that certain optical rays pour out from the eyes, touch and encompass what is seen, and then the appearance (τὸ εἶδος) of the object is transported back to be apprehended by the mind (or intellect).[41] Nelson argues that it is an important aspect of Photius' doctrine that the process involves not just the sense of sight, but the sense of touch as well: 'the optical rays touched and encompassed the object'.

However, Nelson's most interesting contribution comes when he brings another motif into the argument. He quotes a passage from Nikolaos Mesarites about the representation of Christ in the main dome of the church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople.[42] Since the mosaic is lost together with the church, Nelson says it probably resembled the mosaic of the Pantocrator in the church of Daphni. To a modern beholder it may look 'flat and two-dimensional, a posterlike image pasted to the gold ceiling of the church', but Mesarites saw it 'as a figure leaning past the rim of heaven and down into our space. Christ is not behind what we regard as the pictorial plane. He comes down from heaven into the actual space and eye of the beholder, whether pure or impure in heart.' Nelson says that this immediacy and presence is a consequence of extramission, 'and, of course, of the religious doctrines that stressed the presence and immediacy of the depicted, the archetype, in and through the depiction'.

This may highlight the epistemic event commented on above. The point is that when the image is seen it somehow, to use figurative language, withdraws into the prototype. Maybe this sheds some light on what Nelson commented on above, viz. Mango's suggestion of an almost naturalistic perception and Nelson's own emphasis on being lifelike, meaning living or alive. Both sayings are rather puzzling: did the Byzantines perceive their icons in another way than we do? Siri Sande remarks that 'the Greeks in particular were not too fussy about a physical resemblance between sitter and portrait', and Sande argues that the icon is a kind of portrait.[43] Maybe the solution is that according

[41] This is not the place to go into Photius' doctrine of vision or perception in general, but the question of what is received by the subject in an act of perception has been an issue in modern Aristotelian scholarship; cf. papers by Burnyeat, Nussbaum and Putnam, and Sorabji in Nussbaum and Rorty (2003). One interesting aspect of this discussion concerns what it means to receive the εἶδος of the object without its matter. However, if in our present context εἶδος means the appearance of the likeness of the paradigm, then we have a slightly different kind of problematic.

[42] Nelson (2000), 156.

[43] Sande (2004), especially p. 93. Bevan (2014), 169–78, discusses the issue and is rather sceptical about the religious value of what he considers imaginative images of holy persons even if we cannot help forming them in our mind.

to iconophile doctrine, as well as according to the perception of the faithful, the image is lifelike since it somehow merges with the paradigm in the epistemic event: what is seen is Christ, not an image of Christ.

Theories of perception probably spring from concerns that one already has, so that they may be more interesting as witnesses to primary attitudes (i.e. preconceived and hidden knowledge or presuppositions) than for their scientific value. Nelson points out that vision in Byzantium was 'moral and situational',[44] and all of this suggests that there is a *hermeneutical aspect of perception*: perception is contextual and presupposes background knowledge that is essential for this particular kind of Christian culture. Photius himself says:

> Just as speech is transmitted by hearing, so a form through sight is imprinted upon the tablets of the soul, giving to those whose apprehension is not soiled by wicked doctrines a representation of knowledge concordant with piety.[45]

Whenever we perceive what hermeneutics calls *meaningful material* (like images), certain layers of background knowledge are activated. We cannot help this. However, it could be claimed that our apprehension is 'soiled by wicked doctrines' so that we do not see properly. That is, if we do not have an attitude that is already formed through orthodox dogma, i.e. as 'concordant with piety', we will not be able to 'read' the image the way it should be read. As was suggested above, the image may only have a certain potential signification if the prototype is *already* meaningful for the beholder. To be meaningful for the beholder means here to be grasped from the point of view of orthodoxy.

Photius' audience had, of course, the hermeneutical presuppositions necessary to disclose the significance of the image, and he can turn directly to the meaning of it: 'Christ came to us in the flesh, and was borne in the arms of His Mother. This is seen and confirmed and proclaimed in the icons, the teaching made manifest by means of personal eyewitness, and impelling the spectator to unhesitating assent.'[46] To see the mosaic of the Virgin is to have a 'most exact vision

[44] Nelson (2000), 158.

[45] Mango, *The Homilies of Photius* (1958), 294; Photii, *Orationes et homiliae*, vol. 2 (1900), 304–5.

[46] Mango, *The Homilies of Photius* (1958), 293; Photii, *Orationes et homiliae*, vol. 2 (1900), 304.

of truth' (*τὴν τοῦ ἀληθοῦς ἀκριβεστάτην θέαν*).[47] It is interesting to notice that to behold the image is to behold (contemplate) the mystery of divine motherhood as if having *eyewitness access* (*αὐτοψία*) to it. As we have already commented, when eyesight touches the image the *appearance* (*τὸ εἶδος*) is brought to the mind and from there to memory.[48] All of this seems to be quite consistent with Theodore's doctrine of how the icon serves the beholder.

The appearance is brought to memory. (The function of memory is described more extensively in the Appendix.) Memory is an important aspect of Theodore's doctrine of images. He comments on this in the context of his critique of the iconoclast approach to the Eucharist.[49] He quotes Christ's words from St Paul's description of the primitive Eucharistic celebration (1 Cor. 11:24): 'do this in remembrance of me' (*τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν*).[50] This mystery, Theodore says, sums up the *whole* Economy. The whole is signified by its most important part. Then he says: 'We manifestly accomplish the *memorials* of His Nativity and Theophany' (*Φαινοίμεθα γὰρ καὶ τῶν Γενεθλίων καὶ τῶν Θεοφανίων ὑπομνήματα τελοῦντες*). We find something quite similar in a homily for Christmas by St John Chrysostom.[51] He urges his hearers to come to the church to see the Lord wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger, which *in casu* is the holy table. For Chrysostom the Eucharistic elements merge with the new-born Christ. The Eucharistic presence is at the same time Christ's presence at the feast of His birth in the flesh, and this *anamnetic*, liturgical presence comprises all feasts, like Theophany, Easter, Ascension, and Pentecost. According to Theodore, the icons are memorials in the sense that they bring our minds to the events and the persons that are represented in them.[52] It seems quite obvious that for him the Eucharistic *anamnesis* or recollection, which is a making present of Christ, comes to comprise not only the great feasts of the church, but also the function of the icon.

[47] Mango, *The Homilies of Photius* (1958), 290; Photii, *Orationes et homiliae*, vol. 2 (1900), 299.

[48] Mango, *The Homilies of Photius* (1958), 294; Photii, *Orationes et homiliae*, vol. 2 (1900), 305. Cf. John of Damascus, *Imag*. 1.11, Johannes von Damaskos, ed. Kotter, vol. 3 (1975), 85, lines 16–19.

[49] *Antirrheticus* 1.10, PG 99: 340a–d.

[50] *Antirrheticus* 1.10, PG 99: 340b–c.

[51] Cf. John Chrysostom, *On the Incomprehensible Nature of God* 6.24 and 26–8.

[52] Cf. *Antirrheticus* 1.13, PG 99: 344c–d and 1.17, 348b–c.

The icon is seen or contemplated. It is unfortunately not possible to enter into a detailed discussion of the terminology of contemplation in the present context. This is certainly a topic for a whole book in itself. The Greek terms (*θεωρία*, *θεωρέω*) connote viewing or beholding, and used in connection with the mind or intellect (*νοῦς*) they connote consideration, contemplation, speculation, or theory. In Aristotle this is the highest epistemic activity of the intellect when it tries to grasp first principles.[53] In later developments the terms at least connote something like intellectual or spiritual vision. It is not at all clear, however, how such intellectual or spiritual vision should be understood. Somehow it might sound rather 'mystical', as some kind of extraordinary experience. Maybe it is conceived of as an extraordinary experience, not necessarily in the sense of having supernatural visions, but rather in the sense of an inspired clear-sighted understanding of something beyond immediate sense perception. In St Maximus the Confessor an aspect of the contemplative life is to achieve a deep understanding of the cosmos from the point of view of the divine principles that constitute it.[54]

Theodore uses the terminology of contemplation in connection with a small range of epistemic situations. As already said, traditionally the activity of contemplation is conceived of as a function of the mind or the intellect. However, the terms carry diverse senses according to context. Theodore most frequently uses this terminology when he speaks of how the humanity of Christ is 'perceived'. He says for instance that the whole (human) nature of Christ is 'contemplated in an individual manner' (*ἐν ἀτόμῳ θεωρουμένην*).[55] This is repeated several times.[56] We also find the similar expression 'contemplated in an hypostasis' (*ἐν ὑποστάσει τεθεωρημένη*).[57] It seems that in these connections the term comes close to something as simple as 'to see', but one might suggest that it more precisely means 'to conceive of', 'to understand', or 'to think of'. The first instance might suggest this, since it says that the whole nature is '*contemplated* in an individual manner, for otherwise how could He [Christ] be *seen*?'[58] It could be interpreted thus: the whole

[53] Cf. *Nicomachean Ethics* bk 10, ch. 7: 1177b16–26.

[54] Cf. for instance *Ambiguum* 20, PG 91: 1240b.

[55] *Antirrheticus* 1.4, PG 99: 332d–333a.

[56] Cf. *Antirrheticus* 3 Alpha 16, 17, 18, 24; PG 99: 397a, c–d, and 401a.

[57] *Antirrheticus* 3 Alpha 34, PG 99: 405a–b.

[58] *Antirrheticus* 1.4, PG 99: 332d–333a: *ἀλλὰ μὴν τὴν ἐν ἀτόμῳ θεωρουμένην πῶς γὰρ ἂν καὶ ὦπται.*

human nature is present in Christ, conceived of (or thought of) in an individual manner, and if we do not think of Him thus, how could He be seen?

There are, however, other instances, for example when Theodore talks about Old Testament modelled forms like the cherubim over the mercy seat and the serpent of bronze, and says these should lead Israel symbolically towards 'contemplation and worship' (*θεωρίαν καὶ λατρείαν*) of the one God.[59] In this saying the term probably suggests contemplation of God in the sense of to dwell intellectually or spiritually on God's perfections (despite the limitations such a conception obviously has), not a purely theoretical understanding of God.

In two places we find that the terminology of contemplation does not surface, but nevertheless seems to lurk in the background. These are especially interesting in the present context. Both are found in the first *Antirrheticus* (the second one has already been quoted above as well):

> And if the symbol in animal form cured those who had been bitten by its sight alone, how could not the holy representation of Christ's very form do otherwise than hallow those who see it?[60]
>
> *Καὶ εἰ ὁ θηρόμορφος τύπος ὁρώμενος μόνον τοὺς δεδηγμένους ἰᾶτο, πόσον οὐχ ὁ ἱερότυπος χαρακτὴρ τοῦ Χριστοῦ βλεπόμενος ἁγιάσειε τοὺς τεθεαμένους*;
>
> So whether in an image, or in the Gospel, or in the cross, or in any other consecrated object, God is evidently worshipped 'in spirit and in truth', as the materials are exalted by the raising of the mind toward God. The mind does not remain with the materials, because it does not trust in them: that is the error of the idolaters. Through the materials, rather, the mind ascends toward the prototypes: this is the faith of the orthodox.[61]

What does it mean that the holy representation of Christ's form 'hallows those who see it' (*ὁ ἱερότυπος χαρακτὴρ τοῦ Χριστοῦ βλεπόμενος ἁγιάσειε τοὺς τεθεαμένους*)?[62] The icon serves an *anamnetic* function and the disclosure of Christ's form in the icon is obviously

[59] *Antirrheticus* 1.6, PG 99: 336a.
[60] *Antirrheticus* 1.5, PG 99: 336a (Roth's translation).
[61] *Antirrheticus* 1.13, PG 99: 344d (Roth's translation). For Greek text, see the section 'Matter' above.
[62] *Antirrheticus* 1.5, PG 99: 336a.

understood to work a kind of salutary spiritual effect on the one who sees it. In the icon, or by means of the icon, *Christ is there* in His presence for the beholder. Even if St Paul speaks of another kind of contemplation, it does not seem unreasonable to associate what Theodore says with what Paul says in 1 Corinthians (3:18): 'But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image (*τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα*) from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' Maybe it is this kind of hallowing that Theodore has in mind. The verse would at least no doubt suit his concerns. This brings us back to a rather challenging piece of reasoning that we tried to interpret in Chapter 2. Theodore comments on the saying from John 14:9: 'He who has seen me has seen the Father.' He concludes: 'The remaining alternative is to say that He is speaking of the form of divinity; and this is true.'[63] How should this be understood? We have seen that Theodore denies that what appears as a likeness delineated in the icon implies a division of Christ or a confusion of His natures. The delineated appearance is the likeness of the appearance of the God–man. Even if what appears is human features, the icon as an object of contemplation gives access to the person of Christ, the God–man, as such, including 'the form of divinity'. We have seen how Theodore thinks of the relation between image and prototype, and it is obvious that he sees the meaning of icons in the mediating function of making access to the prototype. In this way the icon is not only a piece of art, but almost a sacramental medium. It is salutary for the believer to contemplate the icon of Christ, since this gives him access to the Saviour Himself and affects his soul with the spiritual activity of the prototype.

If what is disclosed in the image is the prototype itself, the appearance of the hypostasis of Christ by means of the likeness, then the question of the proper attitude or the proper veneration turns up. The question of veneration was central in the iconoclast critique of the icons. The topic turns up again and again in Theodore's refutations when he tries to counter the accusations of idolatry.

The term *προσκύνησις* means a bowing down or falling down as, to quote St John of Damascus, 'a symbol of submission and honor'.[64] He says there are different forms of this, viz. worship or adoration

[63] *Antirrheticus* 3 Alpha 39–41, PG 99: 408b–409a.

[64] St John of Damascus, *Imag*. 1.14; Johannes von Damaskos, ed. Kotter, vol. 3 (1975), 87.

(λατρεία) that is offered to God alone, and various forms of relative veneration depending on the status of the one to whom or to what it is offered, whether they are angels, persons in power, commemorative places, or significant objects.

John's teaching on veneration, however, is slightly obscure and seems to differ from Theodore's teaching. He seems to argue that the believer's attitude towards an icon of Christ is somehow double. On the one hand the believer venerates the icon of Christ, while on the other hand he or she at the same time worships Christ.[65] If this is the case, two distinct mental acts are actualized at the same time in one and the same situation. One might wonder, is this description psychologically adequate or trustworthy? There seems to be another possible interpretation available: when John speaks of the veneration (προσκύνησις) of material objects and the adoration (λατρεία) of Christ, he uses the term veneration in a general sense so that venerating the icon is venerating or, *in casu*, adoring Christ. Then there is one act only, directed beyond the material item as material, towards Christ, and therefore he can say: 'I venerate the image of Christ, as God incarnate.'[66] John's quotation of Basil's words in the same context, 'For the honour given to the image passes over to the archetype', strengthens this interpretation.[67]

If this interpretation is sound, the difference between the doctrines of John of Damascus and Theodore is not striking. On the other hand, Theodore puts things in a different way, maybe in a more straightforward way. He too argues that there are different types of veneration, and he singles out λατρευτικὴ προσκύνησις as offered to God alone,[68] while other kinds of veneration are offered to different persons as is due to each of them. Veneration is ἰσότυπος, which probably means that it is outwardly *shaped alike*, while the *intention* (διάνοια) differs. The most interesting part of Theodore's doctrine of veneration, however, is stressed again and again: *there is one veneration of Christ and His icon*. This is said in several places, for instance in the list of anathemas at the end of the first refutation:

[65] If we compare texts like *Imag.* 1.8, 1.14, and 1.16 (Kotter, vol. 3 (1975), 80–3, 87, 89–92), this seems to be John's teaching.

[66] *Imag.* 1.21, Johannes von Damaskos, Kotter, vol. 3 (1975), 108.

[67] *Imag.* 1.21, Johannes von Damaskos, Kotter, vol. 3 (1975), 108.

[68] This kind of veneration is obviously identical with John's λατρεία. Cf. Theodore, *Anthirreticus* 1.19, PG 99: 348c–d.

If anyone should rashly confuse the relative veneration of Christ in the icon with the veneration of idols, and should deny that it is a veneration of Christ Himself (although the great Basil says that the glory of the prototype is not divided by the glory which is given to the copy), he is a heretic.[69]

Εἴ τις τὴν κατὰ τὴν εἰκόνα σχετικὴν προσκύνησιν τοῦ Χριστοῦ, εἰδώλων προσκύνησιν τολμηρῶς ἀποφαίνοι, καὶ οὐκ αὐτοῦ Χριστοῦ μὴ σχιζομένης τῆς δόξης τοῦ πρωτοτύπου ἐν τῷ παραγώγῳ κατὰ τὸν μέγαν Βασίλειον, αἱρετικός ἐστιν.

The term relative veneration probably means 'the veneration of Christ Himself by means of the likeness in the icon'. This veneration is obviously not split in two mental acts, but is a simplified act of veneration directed to Christ, the paradigm of the icon. This doctrine is argued at some length in the third refutation, where it is stated that 'there is one and the same veneration of the image with the prototype, in accordance with the identity of likeness' (*ἀλλὰ μία καὶ ἡ αὐτὴ τῆς εἰκόνος πρὸς τὸ πρωτότυπον, κατὰ τὴν ταυτότητα τῆς ὁμοιώσεως*).[70] Since the likeness is one, the veneration is one as well.

In 1940 Edwyn Bevan published a little book presented as an 'Inquiry into Idolatry and Image-Worship in Ancient Paganism and in Christianity', where he criticizes Theodore's doctrine in a rather curious argument.[71] Bevan first comments on Thomas Aquinas' view on veneration of images as quite reasonable.[72] Thomas states that since the prototype (exemplar) should be 'adored with the adoration of *latria*', the image should also be adored thus. In his argument he refers to a distinction made in Aristotle's *De memoria* (ch. 1, 450b27): Aristotle says a *mental image* (*φάντασμα*) may be regarded in two ways, viz. as an object of contemplation and as a mental picture of something else. Against this background Thomas says there is a twofold movement of the soul towards the image, viz. one towards the image as a certain thing, one towards the image as an image of something else. These two movements differ:

> Thus therefore we must say that no reverence is shown to Christ's image, as a thing—for instance, carved or painted wood: because reverence is

[69] *Antirrheticus* l.20, PG 99: 349c (Roth's translation).
[70] *Antirrheticus* 3 Gamma, PG 99: 420c–428c; cf. 3 Gamma 1, 421a.
[71] Bevan (2014).
[72] Bevan (2014), 150–3; cf. *Summa theologiae* pt III, qu. 25, art. 3.

> not due save to a rational creature. It follows therefore that reverence should be shown to it, in so far only as it is an image [i.e. of the prototype]. Consequently the same reverence should be shown to Christ's image as to Christ Himself. Since, therefore, Christ is adored with the adoration of latria, it follows that His image should be adored with the adoration of latria.[73]

Bevan says that the 'making of a distinction between the homage offered to the beings represented by the icons—Christ or His Mother or saints or angels—and the homage, of an inferior kind, offered to the icons themselves, is precisely what marked the doctrine of the Greek Church, as against the view formulated, as we have just seen, by St Thomas'.[74] Bevan concludes that in doing so, the 'Greek Church' confers a kind of personality upon the icons (since only rational beings can be subject of veneration):[75] 'And to attribute personality to an image is the basic falsehood of idolatry.' It is against this background that Bevan comments on the doctrine of St Theodore.

Bevan says that Theodore in some places insists, 'as strongly as St. Thomas does, that the homage offered to the image is the same as the homage offered to the person whom the image represents'.[76] On the other hand, Theodore denies 'that the homage offered to an image of Christ is an act of *latria*'. According to Bevan, Theodore argues that it is impious to offer *latria* to any but the Trinity:

> To offer homage to an image of Christ would be equivalent to asserting that the First and Third Persons of the Trinity had become incarnate as well as the Second. I can see no way of reconciling all these statements except on the supposition that Theodore held it wrong to offer latria to Christ Himself, apart from the other two Persons of the Trinity, to the Son, that is to say, incarnate. The image of Christ represents His human nature only.[77]

One of several problems with the claims put forward by Bevan is that he makes no reference to any sources. If this description rests on an interpretation of Theodore's three refutations, one should say that several things are misunderstood. We have seen that Theodore argues systematically and, it might be claimed, coherently that the icon of

[73] The quotation is from Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologica*, translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province (London 1911, reprinted 1981). The parenthesis is inserted by me.

[74] Bevan (2014), 153.

[75] Bevan (2014), 153.

[76] Bevan (2014), 156.

[77] Bevan (2014), 156.

Christ does not represent His human nature only. Maybe it *shows* His human features only, but it *represents* obviously the incarnate God, so that the incarnate God is available through the likeness that is the same in the image as in the person of Christ. By this likeness the image relates the beholder to Christ Himself, and the human intellect or mind intentionally venerates the incarnate God. There is no basis in the refutations for saying that Theodore would deem it wrong to offer *latria* to Christ incarnate. It is in fact very doubtful that any writing left by Theodore would support such a view.

The way Thomas explains the worship of the image of Christ and Christ is, at least on the face of it, quite similar to what Theodore said centuries earlier. It is at first rather hard to differentiate between these two doctrines. However, one might put the question whether something is lacking in Thomas' exposition. He seems to argue that *the image itself* is adored if it is an image of Christ. In Theodore, on the other hand, it seems quite clear that because of the common likeness the image itself is somehow absorbed in the prototype. It somehow disappears into the reality of the thing itself. What is contemplated and worshipped therefore is Christ Himself. What Theodore clearly rejects is that the material object as such is due any veneration. When operating in this field it is important to keep apart the concepts of the 'material substance as such' and 'the material substance as formed'. The latter is the icon, an entity in which matter is modelled into a definite shape in order to represent the likeness of the original as a means of assisting the elevation of the mind towards the reality or truth that the likeness relates to. According to Theodore's arguments, the icon, therefore, is not an image of deceit, but a true image.

Conclusion

We have seen that the iconoclast council of 754 set forth an argument against the holy icons that St Theodore took very seriously. How is it possible to make a true image of the incarnate God? Christ united divine and human nature in Himself. One should expect then that an image would represent both these natures. However, we have seen that Theodore makes the rather obvious claim that it is not natures that are the subject of painting, it is the hypostasis. This, unfortunately, does not solve the problem, since the hypostasis of Christ is the hypostasis of the eternal Son of God, and this is obviously invisible. In order to solve this problem Theodore works out a Christological position of some complexity, the main elements of which are drawn from the tradition of Orthodox Christology. His purpose is to show that if Christ became a human being, He should assume and manifest a particularized humanity. Since that is what He did, He would also be a potential subject of painting. In fact, the painting of an icon of Christ is important, both as a witness to the Incarnation and as a means of contemplation. The last point is essential, since the icon gives access not only to the concrete humanity of Christ, but even creates a possibility for the human mind to ascend to God through contemplating the icon.

Theodore shows how the icon functions when he reflects on the homonymy that explains a certain kind of language we use about the image: 'This is Christ', 'this is the Saviour', etc. One might claim that his justification of the application of the language of the Gospel contributes to the possibility of both a communal (liturgical) and a personal experience of the icon. The icon opens the door to theological truth or reality. However, according to Theodore, the material object itself somehow evaporates into the prototype. Venerating an icon of Christ is therefore the same as venerating Christ Himself. In order to explain how the icon functions as a representation, Theodore also claims that

the prototype cannot be understood as a collection of diverse characteristics, but should be grasped as a whole, what he calls an appearance (*eidos*) or a countenance (*opsis*). An object normally presents itself to our ordinary perception as a whole, and this is the case with the object of painting as well. The icon therefore is the representation of this appearing wholeness of the prototype, and what relates the one to the other is the *likeness*: the prototype is the prototype of an image, and the image is the image of a prototype, since they are related to one another or are even brought together by the likeness.

In my estimation, Theodore is an interesting thinker. His application of certain traditions of logic makes him interesting in the history of the transmittance of logical knowledge. His doctrine of the icon makes him innovative in the history of Christian doctrine. I think we may also conclude that his thinking on how the icon should be understood as a representation makes him interesting in the history of art.

APPENDIX

Why Should There Be Such a Thing as Christian Art at All?

In his *Imago Dei*, Jaroslav Pelikan refers to Vladimir Nabokov's *Lectures on Russian Literature* (1981) where literary imagery is said to be 'the evocation, by means of words, of something that is meant to appeal to the reader's sense of color, sense of outline, or sense of sound, or sense of movement, or any other sense of perception, in such a way as to impress upon his mind a picture of fictitious life that becomes to him as living as any personal recollection'.[1] This is an interesting observation. It is said, of course, of *fiction*, but even so I am convinced it is relevant for sacred texts as well, for example the Christian Gospels. However, the Gospels were not there 'in the beginning'. Before the written texts there were the traditionally transmitted stories of the words and works of Christ (Acts 1:1–3). Telling the story of the works of Christ obviously functioned the way Nabokov describes.

The Gospels, of course, whether told or read, contain ideas in the form of teaching, but they also contain the works of Christ. These works are transmitted as the *acts of salvation history* and as such they obviously evoke the reader's or the listener's 'sense of color, or sense of outline, or sense of sound, or sense of movement, or any other sense of perception, in such a way as to impress upon his mind a picture'. One is reminded of a saying by St Paul (Galatians 3:1): 'You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified.' Christianity is not a Gnostic religion, but a proclamation of the saving acts of the Son of God.

Why should there be something like Christian art at all? This appendix argues for the following answer: because there is such a thing as historical Christianity, embedded in the real world of time and place, received by human beings who learn both through sensual and through intellectual experience. In short, the present investigation does not start with the following question: how can it be that a religion originally opposed to figurative art eventually came to endorse it? In the present context the following question is asked: what is it with Christianity that naturally develops into a worship that is sensual as well as intellectual, that is both material and spiritual? There is a bodily aspect to the Christian faith, an awareness of the importance of the sensual and bodily for creatures that are sensual and bodily. Despite what is said of the body and sensuality by the later fathers of the ascetic tradition, this is

[1] Pelikan (1990), 3.

something Christianity cannot rid itself of. St Paul (Romans 12:1) urges the faithful to offer their *bodies* 'as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God' and calls this a worship that is *λογικήν*. Great thinkers of importance for the ascetic life generally appreciate the natural and perceptible world as God's creation. The problem is not primarily the body or the senses, but how human beings relate to material things psychologically and spiritually.

In the Introduction to this book we saw that the development of early Christian and Byzantine art has been conceived by some influential scholars as a corruption of an original pure, simple, and spiritual Christianity. They are probably influenced by the legacy of nineteenth-century liberal Protestant theology. Christ says in the fourth Gospel (John 4:24): 'God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and truth.' Paul says to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 5:7): 'We live by faith, not by sight' (*διὰ πίστεως γὰρ περιπατοῦμεν, οὐ διὰ εἴδους*). But why read any of this out of context? Paul speaks of the eternal hope of Christians, a hope we cannot 'see' in the present life. This future hope is fulfilled because of Christ and His work of salvation: 'You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified.' The works of Christ are the particular historical events that as such are the foundation for universal salvation, and obviously it is desirable that when heard about, they should nourish the Christian *imagination* (*φαντασία*) and appeal to the mental image-making capacity of human beings. Human beings normally form mental images. It is a general phenomenon. There has never existed such a thing as a pure and spiritual Christian religion, a religion of ideas only.

Art historians have used terms like magic and animism in order to characterize the Byzantine Christian's attitude to images, but what about material elements as media for divine power according to the New Testament itself? Does that also count as magic and animism? The answer, one might reckon, depends on the hermeneutical preconceptions of the scholars. There is, however, one thing to take into account before one falls back on magic and animism, viz. that the ancient world view, as worked out by learned thinkers, could very well allow the activity (*ἐνέργεια*) of divine power (*δύναμις*) in the cosmic fabric. Theories about such a divine presence would, in the ancient world, count as rational thinking, as philosophy in the shape of cosmology, physics, and metaphysics. A historian of philosophy would normally be quite unwilling to call such doctrines superstitious, magic, or animistic.

One might put it rather bluntly: nobody should write on ancient Christian art if he or she has not read Plato's *Timaeus*. However, even if the *Timaeus* was formative for much ancient cosmology this statement is probably an exaggeration. Nevertheless, nobody should write on ancient Christian art without knowledge of the ancient world view. Educated people in late antiquity conceived of the world against the background of an ancient legacy involving many different philosophical influences, such as Plato's *Timaeus* and Aristotle's

De caelo as received and reinterpreted in later writings, for instance as in the pseudo-Aristotelian *De mundo* and Philo of Alexandria's *De opificio mundi*.

De mundo is of particular interest in this connection. The work has been dated variously between the last century BC and the second century AD for different reasons. The author presents his book as a work in the tradition of classical, Aristotelian metaphysics (chapter 1). He wants to 'theologize' about the parts of the whole cosmos, their nature, position, and movement. The cosmos is a system consisting of heaven and earth and what they comprise. It is also the order and arrangement of the whole that is preserved by God (chapter 2). This order consists, as a matter of fact, in a cosmic adjustment of opposites to one another resulting in a harmonious system (chapter 5). The treatise states that God is the interconnecting cause who keeps things together, and a distinction is made between God in Himself and the power (δύναμις) by which the divinity is active in, administers, and preserves the cosmos (chapter 6). By this power, the author shows, it is the nature of the divine to *penetrate all things*. One is reminded here of Stoic physics and the teaching that the divinity penetrates the whole cosmos. That might be part of the background, even if pseudo-Aristotle is not a materialist.[2] What the point is here is simply that for philosophers of the Hellenistic age as well as for late antiquity the conviction that the cosmos is penetrated by divine power and activity is part of their scientific world view and it would be rather strange to brand this as superstitious, magic, or animistic. In Neoplatonism the distribution of divine activity is a continuous movement from top to bottom of the world system and back again (πρόοδος and ἐπιστροφή).[3] Maybe this sheds some light on my earlier, rather obscure, remark that nobody should write on Byzantine art without knowing Plato's *Timaeus*. That material elements may work as vehicles for divine activity could in the ancient world be explained philosophically. The pre-Christian world view was received critically by Christian thinkers and transformed into a Christian world view. The history of Christian cosmology starts with the New Testament and culminates in late antiquity and early Byzantium with thinkers like St Athanasius, St Basil, St Gregory of Nyssa, St Ambrose, St Augustine, Dionysius the Areopagite, and St Maximus the Confessor.

One should not isolate Christ's words in John's Gospel ('God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and truth') from their Johannine and New Testament context. Of course, whether one wants to do so or not might depend on particular theological traditions. One obvious option would be

[2] Cf. Long and Sedley (1992), vol. 1, 274–9.

[3] Plotinus' sophisticated concept of causality as double activity is most interesting in this regard. The system of the world as sketched out in influential church fathers from Origen onwards incorporates a Christian modification of the pagan world view. Cf. Tollefsen (2012).

not to separate the New Testament from its natural environment in the living church, and then read it as shedding light on beliefs, traditions, and practices of the ancient community of Christians. The documents are the written remains of community members and witness to the mentality of their first-century communities.

First-century Christians believed that the Logos had become flesh (John 1:14), that Christ had been transfigured on the mountain, dazzling the eyes of the three apostles with divine light (Matthew 17:1–8), and that a power went out of Christ when the hand of the bleeding woman touched his clothes (Mark 5:30). They believed that Christ healed a man by putting mud on his eyes, ordering him to wash in the Pool of Siloam (John 9:1–7), that the shadow of Peter could procure healing from illness (Acts 5:15), and that handkerchiefs and aprons touched by Paul conveyed cures for illness and expelled evil spirits (Acts 19:11–12). First-century Christians also believed that the bread and wine of the Eucharist gave them community with the risen Christ (1 Cor. 11:17–29).

One might, of course, claim that such beliefs are superstitious, but every attempt to get beyond them to a more 'genuine' Gospel of pure spirituality will be purely a construction based on modern prejudice. It should be said again: there never was a pure and simple spiritual Christianity separated from material elements and physical practices except in the minds of some modern scholars of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and beyond.

Against this background it is no surprise that Christians in late antiquity believed that the bones of saints, dust from their graves, oil from the lamp in a sanctuary, or images of the saints could be vehicles of divine power. There is in principle nothing superstitious about it and in principle no magic is involved, if magic is to manipulate divine power with the aid of certain means. It is simply an aspect of the (rational) belief in how the divinely instituted cosmos and the divine institution of the church may convey the power from on high.

Why is there such a thing as Christian art? Maybe the simplest answer would be: because there is such a thing as Christianity. Instead of asking why Christians yielded to pagan worship of images one should ask what is it about Christianity that, when the time is ripe, naturally makes room for images. Probably some will find the term 'naturally' controversial, but even so, this is a legitimate way to put it. A Byzantinologist may delve into the intricacies of theological argument never to surface again, but then one forgets that what nurtured the practical life of Christians was the gathering of their local church for the celebration of the mysteries. In these gatherings, in addition to the teaching of faith and morals, the stories that founded the group of people as a Christian community were proclaimed: the fulfilment of God's ancient promises, the birth of Christ, His baptism, His teaching and His mighty acts, His transfiguration, crucifixion, burial, and resurrection. This proclamation evoked, to quote Nabokov once more, 'something that is meant to appeal to the

reader's sense of color, sense of outline, or sense of sound, or sense of movement, or any other sense of perception, in such a way as to impress upon his mind a picture of fictitious life that becomes to him as living as any personal recollection'—'fictitious' is the only word that is irrelevant here.

St Paul says to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 2:2) that when he came to them he resolved to know nothing while he was with them 'except Jesus Christ and him crucified'. We should also constantly keep in mind the quotation from his letter to the Galatians cited above (Galatians 3:1): 'You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified.' The Gospel is not some piece of abstract Gnosis. All theoretical and practical teaching stems from stories of acts accomplished in time and place and they naturally nurture the human capacity to make mental images. Would it not be reasonable to suppose that Paul had proclaimed the Gospel of the crucifixion rhetorically in such a way that he evoked (to use Nabokov's words again) the listener's sense of colour, outline, sound, movement, or any other sense of perception, in such a way as to have a picture impressed upon his mind?

In his book *Icon: Studies in the History of an Idea*, Barasch says that in antiquity 'people felt an intense desire to be close to God, to attain his proximity', a desire that might be fulfilled by putting up an image of the god.[4] Of course, Barasch sees the importance of the Incarnation for the Christian conception of God and as the condition for the making of an image, but even so he does not seem to understand the full implications that the Incarnation obviously has. According to Pelikan, we find in the New Testament the contours of what he calls 'the new Christian epistemology':

> …so the coming of the Word made flesh carried the clear implication that in addition to hearing the voice of the spoken word of God, as faithful had done throughout the Old Testament, New Testament believers were in a position to see the flesh of the incarnate Word of God. The ancient priority of hearing in biblical thought, therefore, had now been forced to yield to the priority of seeing, as a consequence of the Incarnation.[5]

Two quotations from the Gospel of John may illustrate Pelikan's point (6:40; 14:6–9):

> For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to (ὁ θεωρῶν) the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.
>
> Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on you do know him and have seen (ἑωράκατε) him.' Philip said, 'Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.' Jesus answered: 'Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, "Show us the Father"?'

[4] Barasch (1992), 28. [5] Pelikan (1990), 99.

Whatever else may be said about theological epistemology in the Old Testament, eyewitness is central to the New Testament history of God's saving work. This is also clearly put in 1 John (1:1–3):

> That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

What brings salvation to the world is not any 'pure spirituality'; rather it is the experience of the Son of God and what He accomplished. However, to see, hear, and touch in the Scriptures probably do not connote a simple act of sensation. The verb *θεωρεῖν* (cf. the quotation from John 6:40 above) is not just to throw a glance, but may mean to behold, to contemplate, to consider something. A hermeneutical preconception seems to be implied, viz. that there is something to be aware of, something worth seeing. To see the Son is therefore not just to have seen Him incidentally. And when Jesus says that the beholder has seen the Father by seeing Him, it might mean that the Son does the works of the Father (cf. John 14:10–11) and by seeing these as such, one sees, i.e. contemplates, the Father in the Son. But even if sight brings one to a knowledge that is beyond the power of vision as such, one has to acknowledge that ordinary human sight is the starting point. The New Testament story of the transfiguration of Christ does not suggest that the apostles were in any particular contemplative condition, rather that they saw Christ in dazzling light with their human eyes. However, in Christian tradition this has been interpreted in the way that they saw the transfigured Christ with their sight transfigured by the Holy Spirit.[6] Whatever way one interprets these words from the New Testament one clearly finds an emphasis on perception and experience in the meeting with the revelation of Christ.

If the events of salvation history are basic for the founding of the church and if Christians formed their identity as Christians in familiarity with these events, then the *rhetorical* re-enactment becomes crucial. It is obviously desirable to conjure up mental images of God's works for the salvation of the world and probably it cannot be avoided. The step from appreciating a mental image to appreciating a painted image could be expected to occur in the fullness of time, and there are even more factors in the primitive church that contribute to such a development.

[6] Cf. St Maximus the Confessor, *Ambiguum* 10, PG 91: 1128a. Cf. the book by Brian Daley, *Light on the Mountain: Greek Patristic and Byzantine Homilies on the Transfiguration of the Lord* (New York 2013).

From the start it must have been an important element in the Christian church to preserve the memory of God's saving acts. Memory and recollection would serve an important role. Christianity, as a tradition, is essentially bound to these mental powers. There is a teaching that should be preserved, a message that should be preached, a community that should be nurtured liturgically through the days and years. A most central element in this was the *gathering* of the faithful for the Eucharistic celebration.[7] For centuries the *ἐκκλησία* was the gathering of those who are summoned by the word of God. In pre-Christian usage the term referred to 'a regularly summoned political body'.[8] The term is connected with the verb *ἐκκαλέω* which means call out or forth, summon forth.[9] In New Testament usage prevalent senses are a gathering, i.e. an assemblage of Christians, i.e. people summoned by the word of God, further the universal church as the sum total of all Christians, and assemblies of Christians who meet in private homes.[10] In the New Testament the term is never used for the building in which these gatherings take place.

At the day of Pentecost, as described in Acts, the pouring out of the Holy Spirit summoned people in Jerusalem to the preaching of St Peter and to baptism (Acts 2:1–6, 14, and 41). As the new people of God, the church 'continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers' (Acts 2:42).

The celebration of the Eucharist became an essential element in the Christian gathering. In this celebration the Christians became one with the risen Christ and with one another (1 Cor. 10:16–17): 'Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation (*κοινωνία*) in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf we, who are many, are one body, for all partake (*μετέχομεν*) of the one loaf.' St Paul describes the institution of the Eucharist the following way (1 Cor. 11:23–6):

> For I received from the Lord what I also passed to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me (*τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν*).' In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

The celebration, even in its simple, original form, is not just a memorial service recalling a sacrifice in the past, but makes the risen Lord present for the

[7] Of course, the history of the development of how the Christian Last Supper and Eucharist were celebrated is long and complex. The dissemination of the letters of St Paul and the Gospels must have contributed to some uniformity. See the descriptions of this history in McGowan (2014).

[8] Bauer et al. (1973), 240.

[9] Liddell and Scott.

[10] Bauer et al. (1973), 240.

congregation (ἐκκλησία). We may talk of an *anamnetic* presence and of an experience of *liturgical simultaneity* with the event itself.

The dynamics that in course of time made it possible to transfer the term ἐκκλησία to a building is already present in New Testament thinking. Paul speaks of the faithful as 'the temple (ναὸς) of the living God' (2 Cor. 6:16, cf. 1 Cor. 3:16–17). He writes in 1 Timothy (3:14–15) about 'how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household (ἐν οἴκῳ θεοῦ), which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth'. In Hebrews (3:6) it is said that 'Christ is faithful as son over God's house. And we are his house (οἶκος), if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.' In 1 Peter (2:4–5) we find the following words: 'As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him—you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house (οἶκος πνευματικὸς) to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.' When there is metaphorically talk of the assembly of the faithful or the *ekklesia* as temple or house, even as a house of living stones, the foundation is laid for transferring the term *ekklesia* to a cult building as well.

The *ekklesia* is the assembly of faithful that is constituted as one body with Christ as the head through baptism and the *anamnetic* celebration of the Eucharist. All God's faithful throughout history belong to this body, as members of it. Therefore the author of the Hebrews can enumerate Old Testament figures as heroes of the faith (chapter 11) and say (12:1): 'Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.' If all these elements are taken together it should not be particularly surprising eventually to find Christian assembly rooms and churches decorated with figurative motifs on the walls.[11]

To describe the development of Christian worship from its earliest beginnings to the Constantinian church is a major task that may easily fill several books.[12] Nothing of the kind will be attempted here. However, the letter to the Hebrews (4:12–10:18) describes the high priesthood of Christ in a way that for early generations of Christians must have formed their perception of their own services. That Christ entered the heavenly sanctuary with His body as an eternal sacrifice must quite early have been conceived in Eucharistic terms. Eusebius witnesses to this in his panegyric of Paulinus of Tyre, when he describes and contemplates the new church of Tyre.[13] Eusebius indicates that the bishop serves at the altar on behalf of Christ, and the material altar is obviously seen as a type of the heavenly altar at which Christ, the High Priest,

[11] The church found in Dura Europos is an interesting example, cf. Weitzmann and Kessler (1990).

[12] A lot of interesting material may be found in a recent book by McGowan (2014).

[13] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 10.66–8.

serves. Christ's sacrifice of Himself is conceived in a Eucharistic way, and the allusions to the letter to the Hebrews are obvious.

The Christian gathering room set apart a special place for the mystery of the Eucharist, eventually called the sanctuary. Developments in the fourth century especially, after the peace of the church, when new types of Christian cult buildings were created, brought with them possibilities for more complex elaborations of ritual and the use of sacred space.[14] Every Eucharistic celebration was understood as participation in the once and for all sacrifice of Christ. In his *Homilies on Hebrews* St John Chrysostom (*c*.340/50–407) says that the sacrifice offered in the church is not another sacrifice, but is always the same, being the remembrance of Christ's once and for all sacrifice.[15] Martos sums up the development when he says:

> And in time, as the fellowship meal was abandoned and Christian worship consisted mainly of prayers and the sharing of bread and wine, the conception of this sacramental action as a kind of sacrifice, continuing or participating in the sacrifice of Christ, became predominant in Christian worship.[16]

When 'Cyril of Jerusalem' (*c*.348/50–386/7) explains to the former catechumens the rites they had recently participated in, he strikingly indicates that the participation is a mystical unification with Christ himself.[17] While the Eucharist is the anamnetic act par excellence, baptism, for instance, is also understood within the horizon of 'making present'. Baptism is communion with Christ's true sufferings 'in imitation' (ἐν μιμήσει).[18] The imitative aspect is the three immersions in water that point symbolically to Christ's three days of burial.[19] Even if the baptismal candidates undergo the *likeness* (ὁμοίωμα) of Christ's sufferings and death, their participation in salvation is in *truth* or *reality* (ἀλήθεια).[20] Cyril's text gives the impression of a strong sense of divine *presence*: the candidates are really unified with the present Lord in his sufferings and his resurrection. These events are not just some distant memories of the past; they are obviously mystically available as the reality into the power of which one is incorporated.

In his fifth *Mystagogical catechesis* on the Eucharistic rite, 'Cyril' says that when we approach the most awful hour (τὴν φρικωδεστάτην ὥραν) we sing the 'Holy, holy, holy' that we may join in hymns with the beings in the world above. The celebrant also commemorates the saints and all those that have fallen asleep as if having in mind what Hebrews (12:1) calls the 'great cloud of

[14] Cf. McGowan (2014), 232–7. Christian ritual evolved not only in the building as such, but included the use of public space.

[15] St John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Hebrews* 17.6.

[16] Martos (1981), 243.

[17] Juliette Day (2007) argues that the five post-baptismal, mystagogical catecheses should be attributed to John, St Cyril's successor in Jerusalem.

[18] Cyril, *Mystagogical catecheses* 2.6.

[19] Cyril, *Mystagogical catecheses* 2.4.

[20] Cyril, *Mystagogical catecheses* 2.7.

witnesses' that surrounds us. 'Cyril' obviously describes a rite that opens up the experience of liturgical simultaneity. He says that when we offer supplications for those who have fallen asleep we 'offer up Christ, sacrificed to our sins, propitiating our merciful God both for them and for ourselves'.[21] So what is accomplished at the Holy Table in the church is the *anamnetic* sanctification of bread and wine by the agency of the Holy Spirit that makes present what Christ once and for all accomplished and timelessly brings forward in the heavenly sanctuary. This description of the Eucharist definitely brings to mind the heavenly service of Christ as described in Hebrews.[22] The water of baptism and the elements of the Eucharist brought the believer into the divine presence. There can in principle be no hindrance to seeing other proper material objects as vehicles of the divine reality. The question, of course, would be what could count as proper or not proper. If mental images are unavoidable as a result of telling the stories about Christ, it should be expected that eventually it would be considered proper to paint the images of the agent of salvation and the acts He performed.

That this *anamnetic* presence or experience of liturgical simultaneity eventually spreads to the gradually developing festal calendar of the church should come as no surprise. A homily by St John Chrysostom in which he speaks of the feast of Christ's birth illustrates this.[23] He admonishes his hearers to leave their houses empty that they may see the Master wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. To see Him thus is to see Him at the altar: 'For the table of this altar takes the place of the manger.' The Lord's body is lying on the altar, not in swaddling clothes, but 'clothed all about by the Holy Spirit'. The consciousness of Eucharistic presence spreads beyond the original ritual limits to comprise the presence of Christ at the Christmas feast. It does not stop at that, however, since for John this ritual (or liturgical) mentality involves *all* feasts. He mentions the Theophany, Easter, Ascension, and Pentecost:[24] 'So that it is, just as different rivers arise from a source, these other feasts have their beginning from the birth of Christ.'

This mentality is probably the background for the striking use of the term *today* (σήμερον) in some festal homilies. For John Chrysostom the newborn child is lying on the altar on the feast of Christmas, being made present in the Eucharistic elements. In a festal oration for Easter, St Gregory Nazianzen (*c*.329/30–*c*.390) says:[25] 'Yesterday I was crucified with Him; today I am glorified with Him; yesterday I died with Him; today I am quickened with Him;

[21] Cyril, *Mystagogical catecheses* 5.10.

[22] In San Vitale in Ravenna there is an interesting mosaic (sixth century) in the lunette on the right wall, showing Abel and Melchizedek offering to God. This mosaic most probably is inspired by the letter to the Hebrews (cf. 6:19–7:28 and 11:4).

[23] John Chrysostom, *On the Incomprehensible Nature of God* 6.26–8.

[24] John Chrysostom, *On the Incomprehensible Nature of God* 6.24.

[25] Gregory Nazianzen, *Oration* 1.4.

yesterday I was buried with Him; today I rise with Him.' In his second oration on Easter he says that 'today is salvation come into the world, to that which is visible and to that which is invisible, Christ is risen from the dead, rise you with Him'.[26] There is also a great sense of presence in a homily on the birth of Christ when Gregory says, 'Christ is born, glorify Him.'[27] In a homily on the Crucifixion and the Good Thief Theophilus of Alexandria (*c*.345–412) says:

> Come, peoples of all the earth, rejoice, celebrate today because the Lord reigns from the wood. All you that move in the waters raise your spirits, because the blood was shed mingled with water. All you birds of the sky flap your wings with joy, because he extended his arms on the cross, and perfume filled the whole air. Wild animals of the desert rejoice, because his preaching to you was bountiful.[28]

There are two interesting things here, viz. the 'today', i.e. the presence of the event of Crucifixion, and also that the power of the cross becomes a Gospel to the animal world as well.

Liturgical study is a highly complex scholarship into which we shall not enter here. However, several hymns found in the *Triodion* begin with 'today' and may be very old.[29] St Cyril of Jerusalem may have written several so-called *troparia* for the *Service of the Twelve Gospels of Holy Friday*.[30] Among these is the very striking Antiphon fifteen:

> Today He who hung the earth upon the waters is hung upon the Cross (three times).
> He who is King of the angels is arrayed in a crown of thorns.
> He who wraps the heaven in clouds is wrapped in the purple of mockery.
> He who in Jordan sets Adam free receives blows upon His face.
> The Bridegroom of the Church is transfixed with nails.
> The Son of the Virgin is pierced with a spear.
> We venerate Thy Passion, O Christ (three times).
> Show us also Thy glorious Resurrection.[31]

Once more we find the expression of liturgical contemporaneity ('today') and the cosmic dimensions of the event. We found both of these aspects in the quotation from Theophilus above as well. The development of Christian cosmology is a long and intricate history. However, we can see that the cosmic

[26] Gregory Nazianzen, *Oration* 45.1.
[27] Gregory Nazianzen, *Oration* 38.1.
[28] Translation in *Theophilus*, ed. Russell (2007), 69.
[29] The *Triodion* is the service book of the Orthodox Church that provides the texts for the services of the pre-Lenten weeks of preparation, Great Lent, and Holy Week.
[30] I should like to thank Stig R. Frøyshov, professor in liturgical studies at the Faculty of Theology, University of Oslo, for information concerning this. Frøyshov directed me to three relevant articles he has published in the online *Canterbury Dictionary of Hymnology* (2013): Byzantine rite, Rite of Jerusalem, and Sophronios of Jerusalem. His argument for Cyril's authorship is found in the article on Sophronios.
[31] Quoted from *The Lenten Triodion*, transl. by Mother Mary and Kallistos Ware (London and Boston 1978), p. 587.

dimensions of the divine Economy were strengthened in the Christian metaphysics of Dionysius the Areopagite and St Maximus the Confessor. The experience of presence and the consciousness of renewal became an integral part of Byzantine and Orthodox Christianity. In a homily from the twelfth century the Russian bishop Cyril of Turnov can say on the Sunday after Easter:

> Last Sunday all things were transformed: earth became heaven, cleansed by God from the defilement of demons; angels and women humbly celebrate the Resurrection. Creation was renewed… The heavens have stripped off the dark clouds like a coarse garment and are filled with brightness, and with the bright air they proclaim the glory of the Lord.[32]

It is no surprise that such a tradition of worship has nurtured what has been called *mystagogical* interpretation, to which writers like Dionysius, St Maximus the Confessor, and St Germanus of Constantinople contribute.[33] Maximus' *Mystagogia* interprets the church and the liturgy as encapsulating in figures the whole cosmic drama of salvation. The consciousness of the mystery of divine transcendence and divine condescension in the Incarnation opens up a whole world of symbolism and imagery. It is possible to see the growth of material culture of symbolic items from the primitive church to the Constantinian and Byzantine church as a continuous and natural development. Since Christianity is the religion of the incarnate God, the *memory* of the divine acts of salvation in history was central from the beginning. The witnesses and teachers of these salvific events also became committed to memory (cf. Hebrews 12:1–2). It is no surprise, then, that Christians started rather early to paint or set up images of God's saving acts (Old and New Testament scenes) in assembly houses and catacombs.[34] It is no surprise when church fathers like St Basil the Great, St Gregory of Nyssa, and St John Chrysostom talk with reverence of images and how they function.[35] It comes further as no surprise that the Christian religion develops into a religion of both Word and Image. Finally, it is not surprising that there is no image doctrine before the iconoclast controversy, since the practice to have and to use images probably developed without substantial opposition.

[32] Quoted from Averintsev (2006), 228.

[33] Louth (1989), 29, argues hypothetically that 'the heart of Denys' theology is liturgical', and I tend to agree with this. The whole corpus is therefore of relevance. In addition, cf. Maximus the Confessor, *Mystagogia* and Germanus, *Historia ekklesiastike*, Greek text and translation by Paul Meyendorff in St Germanus of Constantinople, *On the Divine Liturgy* (1984).

[34] Cf. the excavated church (from 240s) of Dura Europos. For the catacombs, cf. for instance the sober analyses of Finney (1994).

[35] Basil, *Homily on Barlaam the Martyr*, PG 31: 489a–b; Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Divinity of the Son and the Holy Spirit*, GNO 10.2: 138–9; John Chrysostom, *Homily of Praise on our Father among the Saints Meletius*, PG 50: 515–20, translated by W. Mayer in St John Chrysostom, *The Cult of the Saints* (2006), 41–8.

So, why should there be such a thing as Christian art? The reason, one might urge, is simply because there is such a thing as Christianity. Christianity is not a purely abstract religious doctrine. Of course, there is teaching, doctrine, but all doctrine is founded on divine revelation, and revelation is not the communication of propositions. Revelation is given in events, and Christian doctrine is based on these events. The importance of the events, as divine acts, is not reduced by the extraction of doctrine. Further, Christianity is worship, liturgical practice, and, as we have seen, an essential part of this practice is commemorative. This commemorative dimension of Christianity, which is executed both in sacramental acts and in reading and preaching, calls upon the human capacity to form images consisting of all sorts of perceptive elements. We cannot help conceiving such images. In time, to have them painted on the walls of a church or on panels could be deemed a natural development. The Christian consciousness of historical events with cosmic implications, of sacramental presence with a gradually developed cycle of commemorations, brings forth the world of Christian imagery. That such images somehow became a means of veneration seems also quite natural: the events and the persons exhibited are not any events and persons. They are the events and agents of salvation. It is the incarnate God that is painted, and these others are the ministers of the Word. It would be natural to show these events and these persons reverence. Christianity is the religion of presence and the images may be venerated because *the honour offered to the image is transferred to the prototype*.

The last sentence should sound familiar to anyone that has read anything about the image controversy. It has been quoted several times in the preceding chapters. Those who defend the icons frequently make use of this quotation from St Basil's treatise *On the Holy Spirit*. The whole passage runs as follows:

> How does one and one not equal two gods? Because we speak of the emperor, and the emperor's image, but not of two emperors. The power is not divided, nor the glory separated. The dominion and authority over us is one; and the doxology ascribed by us is one and not many, because the honour paid to the image passes on to the prototype. Now what in the one case the image is by imitation, that in the other case the Son is by nature; and as in works of art the likeness is dependent on the form, so in divine and uncompounded nature the union consists in the communion of the Godhead.[36]

What we should note here is first that the saying has seemingly little to do with the painting and veneration of images as such. It is part of Basil's argumentation for the full divinity of the Son of God. On the other hand, it is obvious that Basil states a general principle that holds for certain kinds of relatives: the image of the emperor and the emperor, a piece of art and its paradigm, a son and his father, the only-begotten Son and God the Father. As we have seen

[36] *Liber de Spiritu Sancto* 18.45, PG 32: 149c.

above (Chapter 3), the principle is that certain things predicated of, or said of, or addressed to the first-mentioned of the *relata* in each pair passes over to the second one. There is no doubt that Basil claims this principle as relevant for works of art in relation to their paradigms, which also indicates that the later iconophile application of Basil's saying is relevant as well.

It seems unreasonable to claim that all ordinary Christians in the ancient world were naïve and superstitious so that when images came into use they were not able to distinguish them from their prototypes. It is quite reasonable to claim that the focus of a Christian would normally be on the one who is painted and not on the material object of the image as such. However, the detailed definitions of all of this had to wait for the image controversy to be explicitly stated. St Theodore's teaching on the relation between image and prototype is eventually worked out as a quite sophisticated doctrine.

How did the Christian defence of images originate? It is well known that pagan philosophers from an early date criticized contemporary cults involving the use of images of the gods. Heraclitus is interesting in this regard.[37] He attacks (as does Xenophanes) what he considers a false conception of the gods, and shows how such a conception leads to shameful and ridiculous acts, such as ritual purifications with blood and praying to statues. Kahn thinks Heraclitus' provocative words on contemporary cults have a definite purpose: 'to shock his reader or auditor into a realization of what is in some sense "obvious", that behaviour endorsed by the strongest sanctions of the society will reveal itself to a thoughtful observer as odious and absurd, since if it were not done in the name of the gods it would count as stupidity or insanity'.

An interesting pagan explanation of the usefulness of images is found in Dio Chrysostom (*c*.40–120). In his *Twelfth Discourse*, 'On man's first conception of God', he states that there are several sources for man's belief in God, viz. an innate source, further, what is derived from the poets and the lawgivers, and eventually, what is derived from the art of skilled craftsmen (§44). However, is the shape produced by art worthy of the divine nature (§52)? Dio lets Pheidias answer (§55–83): since the nature of divinity is mind and prudence that cannot be portrayed, the artist uses the human body as a symbol for the divine since human beings are intelligent creatures (§59). Images are needed since man longs to adore the god close at hand, 'approaching and laying hold of him with persuasion by offering sacrifice and crowning him with garlands' (§60–1).[38] The image of the divinity is, therefore, a symbolic representation of that which is inaccessible in itself. Dio has something very interesting to say about sight and hearing (§71–2): 'Indeed, the popular saying

[37] See comments on fragments D14, D15, and D5 in Kahn (1983), 262–7. Kahn thinks Heraclitus' critique finds its best parallel in the Old Testament, for instance in Isaiah 44:17.

[38] This translation and the next are by J. W. Cohen in the Loeb edition of Dio's discourses, vol. 2.

that the eyes are more trustworthy than the ears is perhaps true, yet they are much harder to convince and demand much greater exactness; for while the eye agrees exactly with what it sees, it is not impossible to excite and cheat the ear by filling it with representations under the spell of metre and sound.' Plato and Aristotle had already stated the priority of sight, and we should here also remember the quotation from Pelikan above, about the new Christian epistemology:[39] 'The ancient priority of hearing in biblical thought, therefore, had now been forced to yield to the priority of seeing, as a consequence of the Incarnation.'

Other learned pagans as well as Dio Chrysostom defended images philosophically in late antiquity. Most striking are some fragments from Porphyry's arguments against the Christians:

> [And those] who make images as objects of veneration for the gods do not imagine that God [himself] is in the wood or the stone or the bronze used in the making of the image.
>
> They do not think for a moment that if a part of the image is cut off that the power of God is thereby lessened. Such images—such as those of animals and those in temples—were erected by ancient peoples for the sake of evoking the memory of the god. They were created so that those who saw them would remember the god or would take time out to perform ritual cleansings, or to make easier the act of prayer, whereby each person supplicates the god for the particular things of which he has need.[40]

Both Dio and Porphyry denied that the image could be identified with the divinity. It rather symbolizes the gods or represents them. Paul Alexander says: 'At some time between the third and the seventh century, Christians took over the pagan argumentation.'[41] However, one might wonder whether this is the most reasonable way to put it. One may suppose that the critique levelled by Christian apologists against the stupidity of identifying idols with the gods by implication could already have contained the conception that images have a *representational* function. Of course, that was not something they would argue. On the other hand, it is likely that the conception of such a representational function was already present both in pagan society and among the Jews, which means that when Basil says that 'the honour paid to the image passes on to the prototype', using the imperial image as an example, it is rather commonplace, even if the deeper philosophical contents of such a notion still needed thorough consideration from Christian thinkers. However, that consideration came as late as in the eighth and ninth centuries, under the image controversy.

[39] Cf. Plato, *Republic*, 507–8, and Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, bk 1, ch. 1, 980a; Pelikan (1990), 99.

[40] Quoted from Porphyry's *Against the Christians*, ed. Hoffman (1994), 85.

[41] Alexander (1958), 33. Meyendorff (1975), 175, accepts Alexander's suggestion.

Maybe icon theology or doctrines of images were first worked out as late as in the seventh century. Maybe they first saw the light of day in polemics against Jewish practices.[42] When Byzantine authorities started removing images from the churches, this became the catalyst to formulate doctrines to legitimize activities that had evolved gradually since the dawn of Christianity. It is interesting that this attack on what some art historians considers a popular, paganized, and superstitious practice called forth a quite advanced *philosophical* defence that definitely belongs to the history of Byzantine philosophy. Even if particular parts of St Theodore's defence are not original, the totality of his doctrine is rather impressive. Whatever the other defenders of images accomplished, Theodore definitely worked out some philosophically interesting pieces of doctrine, like the focus on homonymous predication of descriptions, the notion of the showing itself of an entity as a whole appearance and not as a patchwork of sensible, accidental properties, his teaching of the icon as a semantic object, and his phenomenological-like idea of the image as if 'absorbed' into the prototype. St Theodore the Studite definitely defends a position in the history of Christian intellectual achievements.

On the first Sunday of Great Lent in 843 the Byzantine church celebrated the defeat of iconoclasm, a celebration known as the Sunday of Orthodoxy. I cannot say who wrote the following hymn, but perhaps it stems from the generation of Studite monks from the second half of the ninth century.[43] It does at least contain several terms from St Theodore's refutations of the iconoclasts, now taken into a liturgical language that was destined to become part of the tradition for the centuries that followed:

> You who exist naturally uncircumscribed in your divine nature, O Master, having received flesh in the last days, were pleased to become circumscribed; for in assuming flesh you took upon yourself all its properties as well; therefore we, inscribing your appearance (τὸ εἶδος), the appearance of your likeness, venerate relationally, being exalted towards your love; and receive from your appearance the grace of healing, following the divine traditions of the Apostles.[44]

[42] Cf. Barber (2002), 17.

[43] Cf. Wellesz (1962), 236–7.

[44] From Triodion, the third of the Stichera Prosomoia from the Great Vespers on Saturday evening before the Sunday of Orthodoxy.

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